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MY MEMOIRS

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

IN SIX VOLUMES

The Monument to Alexandre Dumas,
by Gustav Doré, Place Malesherbes, Paris

2643

MY MEMOIRS

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Brog.

TRANSLATED BY

E. M. WALLER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ANDREW LANG

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL. V

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THE MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS

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I AM obliged to retrace my steps, as the putting out to nurse of *Antony* at the Porte-Sainte-Martin has carried me further than I intended.

Bixio had given me a definite answer with regard to my joining the artillery, and I was incorporated in the fourth battery under Captain Olivier.

Just a word or two upon the constitution of this artillery.

The order creating the Garde Nationale provided for a legion of artillery comprised of four batteries.

General La Fayette appointed Joubert provisional colonel of the legion, which consisted of four batteries. It was the same Joubert at whose house, in the Passage Dauphine, a quantity of powder had been distributed and many bullets cast in the July Days. La Fayette had also appointed four captains to enlist men. When the men were enlisted, these captains were replaced by picked officers.

Arnoux was appointed head captain of the first battery. I have already mentioned that the Duc d'Orléans was entered in this battery. Guinard was appointed first captain, and Godefroy Cavaignac second captain, of the second battery. Bastide was appointed senior captain, and Thomas junior captain, of the third battery. Finally, Olivier was first captain, and Saint-Évre second captain, of the fourth battery.

The first and second battery formed a squadron; the third and fourth a second squadron.

The first squadron was commanded by Thierry, who has since become a municipal councillor, and is now Medical Superintendent of Prisons, I believe. The second squadron was commanded by a man named Barré, whom I lost sight of after 1830, and I have forgotten what has become of him. Finally, the whole were commanded by Comte Pernetti, whom the king had appointed our colonel.

I had, therefore, reached the crown of my wishes: I was an artilleryman!

There only remained for me to exchange my uniform as a mounted national guardsman for an artillery uniform, and to make myself known to my commanding officers. My exchange of uniform was not a long job. My jacket and trousers were of the same style and colour as those of the artillery, so I only had to have a stripe of red cloth sewed on the trousers instead of the silver one; then, to exchange my epaulettes and my silver cross-belt at a military outfitter's for epaulettes and a red woollen foraging rope. The same with regard to my schako, where the silver braid and aigrette of cock's feathers had to be replaced by woollen braiding and a horse-hair busby. We did not need to trouble ourselves about carbines, for the Government lent us these; "*lent them*" is the exact truth, for twice they took them away from us! I lighted upon a very honest military outfitter, who gave me woollen braid, kept all my silver trimmings, and only asked me for twenty francs in return; though, it is true, I paid for my sword separately. The day after I had received my complete costume, at eight o'clock in the morning, I made my appear-

ance at the Louvre to take my part in the manœuvres. We had there twenty-four pieces of eight, and twenty thousand rounds for firing.

The Governor of the Louvre was named Carrel, but he had nothing in common with Armand Carrel, and I do not think he was any relation to him.

The artillery was generally Republican in tone; the second and third battery, in particular, affected these views. The first and fourth were more reactionary; there would be quite fifty men among them who, in the moment of danger, would unite with the others.

As my opinions coincided with those of Bastide, Guinard, Cavaignac and Thomas, it is with them that I shall principally deal; as for Captains Arnoux and Olivier, I knew them but little then and have never had occasion to see them again. May I, therefore, be allowed to say a few words of these men, whose names, since 1830, are to be found in every conspiracy that arose? Their names have become historic; it is, therefore, fitting that the men who bore them, or who, perhaps, bear them still, should be made known in their true light.

Let us begin with Bastide, as he played the most considerable part, having been Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1848. Bastide was already at this time a man of thirty, with an expression of countenance that was both gentle and yet firm; his face was long and pale, and his black hair was close cut; he had a thick black moustache, and blue eyes, with an expression of deep and habitual melancholy. He was tall and thin, extremely deft-handed, although he looked rather awkward on account of the unusual length of his neck; in conclusion, he was an adept in the use of sword and pistol, especially the latter, and in what is called in duelling terms, *la main malheureuse*.[1]

So much for his physical characteristics. Morally, Bastide was a thorough Parisian, a thorough native of the rue Montmartre, wedded to his gutter, and, like Madame de Staël, he

[1] TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—Applied to a duellist who always kills or wounds his opponent.

preferred it to the lake of Geneva; unable to do without Paris no matter how dirty it was, physically, morally, or politically; preferring imprisonment in Paris to exile in the most beautiful country in the universe. He had been exiled for several years, and spent two or three years in London. I have heard him say since, that, rather than return there even for two or three months, he would let himself get shot. He has a delightful country house in the neighbourhood of Paris, to which he never goes. Beneath an extremely unsophisticated manner, Bastide concealed real knowledge; but you had to discover it for yourself; and, when he took the trouble to be amusing, his conversation was full of witty sallies; but, as he always spoke very low, only his near neighbour benefited by it. It must be admitted that this quite satisfied him, for I never saw a less ambitious man than he in this respect. He was a bundle of contradictions: he seemed to be nearly always idle, but was, in reality, nearly always busy, often over trifles, as Horace in the Roman forum, and, like Horace, he was completely absorbed in his trifling for the time being; more often still he was occupied over difficult and serious problems in mathematics or mechanics. He was brave without being conscious of the fact, so simple and natural a quality did bravery seem to his temperament and character. I shall have occasion later to record the miraculous feats of courage he performed, and the deliciously cool sayings he uttered while actually under fire, between the years 1830 to 1852. During deliberations Bastide usually kept silent; if his opinion were asked and he gave it, it was always to advise that the question in hand be put into execution as promptly and as openly, and even as brutally, as possible. For example, let us refer to the interview between the Republicans and the king on 30 July 1830; Bastide was among them, awaiting the arrival of the king, just as were the rest. This interval of waiting was put to good use by the representatives of Republican opinion. Little accustomed to the presence of crowned heads or of those on the eve of coronation, they discussed among themselves as to what they ought to do when the lieutenant-general should appear.

Each person gave his opinion, and Bastide was asked for his. "What must we do?" he said. "Why, open the window and chuck him into the street."

If this advice had been as honestly that of the others as it was his own, he would have put it into execution. He had a facile, and even a graceful, pen. In the *National* it was he who had to write impossible articles; he succeeded, as Méry did, in the matter of bouts-rimés with an almost miraculous cleverness. When Minister of Foreign Affairs, he took upon himself the business of everybody else, and he a minister, not only did his own work, but that, also, of his secretaries. We must look to diplomatic Europe to pronounce upon the value of his work.

Godefroy Cavaignac, as he had recalled to the memory of the Duc d'Orléans, was the son of the member of the convention, Jean Baptiste Cavaignac; and, we will add, brother to Eugène Cavaignac, then an officer in the Engineers at Metz, and, later, a general in Algeria, finally dictator in France from June to December 1848; a noble and disinterested character, who will remain in history as a glittering contrast to those that were to succeed him. Godefroy Cavaignac was then a man of thirty-five, with fair hair, and a long red moustache; although his bearing was military, he stooped somewhat; smoked unceasingly, flinging out sarcastic clever sayings between the clouds of smoke; was very clear in discussion, always saying what he thought, and expressing himself in the best words; he seemed to be better educated than Bastide, although, in reality, he was less so; he took to writing from fancy, and then wrote a species of short poems, or novelettes, or slight dramas (I do not know what to call them) of great originality, and very uncommon strength. I will mention two of these *opuscules*: one that is known to everybody—*Une Guerre de Cosaques*, and another, which everybody overlooks, which I read once, and could never come across again: it was called *Est-ce vous!* One of his chansons was sung everywhere in 1832, entitled *A la chie-en-lit!* which was the funniest thing in the world. Like Bastide he was extremely brave, but

perhaps less determined; there always seemed to me to be great depths of indifference and of Epicurean philosophy in his character. After being very intimate, we were ten years without seeing one another; then, suddenly, one day, without knowing it, we found ourselves seated side by side at the same table, and the whole dinner-time was spent in one long happy gossip over mutual recollections. We separated with hearty handshakes and promises not to let it be such a long time before seeing one another again. A month or two after, when I was talking of him, some one said, "But Godefroy Cavaignac is dead!" I knew nothing of his illness, death or burial.

Our passage through this world is, indeed, a strange matter, if it be not merely a preliminary to another life!

Guinard was notable for his warm-hearted, loyal characteristics; he would weep like a child when he heard of a fine deed or great misery. A man of marvellous despatch, you could have said of him, as Kléber did of Scheswardin. "Go there and get killed and so save the army!" I am not even sure he would have considered it necessary to answer: "Yes, general"; he would have said nothing, but he would have gone and got killed. His life, moreover, was one long sacrifice to his convictions; he gave up to them all he held most dear—liberty, his fortune and health.

From the single sentence we have quoted of Thomas, when he was accosted by M. Thiers on 30 July, my readers can judge of his mind and character. Bastide and he were in partnership, and possessed a woodyard. He was stout-hearted and upright, and had a clever head for business. Unaided, alone, and simply by his wonderful and honest industry, he kept the *National* afloat when it was on the verge of shipwreck after the death of Carrel, from the year 1836 until 1848, when the long struggle bore successful fruit for everybody except himself.

But now let us pass on from the artillerymen to the composition of their batteries.

Each battery was dubbed by a name derived from a special characteristic.

Thus the first was called *The Aristocrat.* Its ranks contained, as we already know, M. le Duc d'Orléans, then MM. de Tracy, Jal, Paravey (who was afterwards a councillor of state), Étienne Arago, Schœlcher, Loëve-Weymars, Alexandre Basset and Duvert.

The second was called *The Republican.* We are acquainted with its two captains, Guinard and Cavaignac; the principal artillerymen were—Guiaud, Gervais, Blaize, Darcet fils and Ferdinand Flocon.

The third was called *La Puritaine*, and it was thus named after its captain, Bastide. Bastide, who was on the staff of the *National*, was the champion of the religious questions, which this newspaper had a tendency to attack after the manner of the *Constitutionnel.* Thence originated the report of his absolute submission to the practices of religion. The *Puritaine* counted amongst its gunners—Carral, Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, Grégoire, Séchan.

The fourth was called *La Meurtrière*, on account of the large number of doctors it contained. We have mentioned its captains; these are the names of the chief "murderers"—Bixio, medical student; Doctors Trélat, Laussedat, Jules Guyot, Montègre, Jourdan, Houet and Raspail, who was half a doctor. The others were Prosper Mérimeé, Łacave-Laplagne, who has since become Minister of Finance; Ravoisié, Baltard, the architect; Desvaux, student, afterwards a lieutenant in the July revolution, and, later still, one of the bravest and most brilliant officers in the whole army; lastly, Bocage and myself. Of course, there were many others in these batteries, for the artillery, I believe, numbered eight hundred men, but we are here only mentioning those whose names survived.

The discipline was very strict: three times a week there was drill from six to ten in the morning, in the quadrangle of the Louvre, and twice a month shooting practice at Vincennes.

I had given a specimen of my strength in lifting—with either five, three, or one other, when the other servants were supposed to be either killed, or *hors de combat*,—pieces of eight weighing from three to four hundred kilogrammes, when, one

day, I received an invitation to be at the Palais-Bourbon at four o'clock in the afternoon, fully armed. The business in hand was *the taking of the Chamber*. We had taken a sort of oath, after the manner of Freemasons and Carbonari, by which we had engaged to obey the commands of our chiefs without questioning. This one appeared rather high-handed, I must admit; but my oath was taken! So, at half-past three, I put on my artillery dress, placed six cartridges in my pouch and one in my carbine, and made my way towards the pont de la Concorde. I noticed with as much surprise as pride, that I was the first arrival. I only strutted about the more proudly, searching along the quays and bridges and streets for the arrival of my seven hundred and ninety-nine comrades who, four o'clock having struck, seemed to me to be late in coming, when I saw a blue and red uniform coming towards me. It was worn by Bixio. Two of us then here alone to capture four hundred and forty-nine deputies! It was hardly enough; but patriotism attempts ambitious things!

Half-past four, five, half-past five and six o'clock struck.

The deputies came out and filed past us, little suspecting that these two fierce-eyed artillerymen who watched them pass, as they leant against the parapet of the bridge, had come to capture them. Behind the deputies appeared Cavaignac in civilian dress. We went up to him.

"It will not take place to-day," he said to us; "it is put off until next week."

"Good!" I replied; "next week, then!"

He shook hands and disappeared. I turned to Bixio.

"I hope this postponement till next week will not prevent us from dining as usual?" I said.

"Quite the reverse. I am as hungry as a wolf! Nothing makes one so empty as conspiring."

So we went off and dined with that careless appetite which is the prerogative of conspirators of twenty-eight years of age.

I have always suspected my new chiefs of wishing to, what

they call in regimental parlance, test me; in which case Cavaignac can only have come just to make sure of my faithfulness in answering to his summons.

Was or was not Bixio in his confidence? I never could make out.

CHAPTER II

Odilon Barrot, Préfet of the Seine—His soirées—His proclamation upon the subject of riots—Dupont (de l'Eure) and Louis-Philippe—Resignation of the ministry of Molé and Guizot—The affair of the forest of Breteuil—The Laffitte ministry—The prudent way in which registration was carried out

NOW, the session of the Chamber had been an animated one that day, and if we had burst into the parliament hall we should have found the deputies in heated discussion over a proclamation issued by Odilon Barrot.

It was a singular position for a man, outwardly so upright and unbending as was Odilon Barrot, which was created by, on the one hand, his duties as Préfet of the Seine about the person of the king and, on the other, the good terms of friendship existing between him and most of us. He held soirées at his house, to which we flocked in large numbers; at which his wife, then still quite young, who seemed a more ardent Republican than her husband, did the honours with the correctness of a Cornelia that was not without a charm of its own. We of course discussed nothing but politics at these gatherings; and especially did we urge Odilon Barrot, in his official capacity as Préfet of the Seine, to hunt for the famous programme of the Hotêl de Ville, which had disappeared on 2 August, and had become more invisible even than the famous provisional government which was represented by a round table, empty bottles and a clerk who never stopped writing except when the pen was snatched out of his hands. That programme had never been discovered from that day to this! Our suggestion worried him much, for our insistence placed him in the following dilemma:—

"My dear Odilon" (we would say), "all the strength of the Government is vested in La Fayette and Dupont (de l'Eure) and yourself; if you, for instance, were to withdraw, we are persuaded that La Fayette and Dupont, the two blind men whom you, good dog, lead by the string, will also retire. . . . So we are going to compel you to retire."

"But how?"

"Oh, it is simple enough! We are going to raise a disturbance to carry off the king from the Palais-Royal. . . . Either you fire upon us, in which case you make yourself unpopular; or you abstain from firing on us, in which case we carry off the king, take him to Ham and proclaim the Republic."

Odilon was well aware that this dilemma was only a joke; but he also knew that there was a feverish spirit in us which any unlooked-for spark might kindle into a blaze and lead to the maddest enterprises being attempted.

One day we drove him into a corner, and he promised that, on the first opportunity, he would make his views known both to the court and to us. This opportunity was the procession which, as I have mentioned, marched through Paris, and proceeded to the Palais-Royal, and to the château de Vincennes, shouting, "Death to the ministers!" It will be recollected that the king and Odilon Barrot had appeared upon the terrace, and that the men who led the procession had thereupon shouted, "Vive Odilon Barrot!" forgetting to shout "Vive le roi!" Whereat Louis-Philippe, as we know, had replied: "These are the sons of the men whom, in 1792, I heard shouting: 'Vive Pétion!'"

The allusion had annoyed Odilon Barrot considerably, and he decided to issue a proclamation of his own. He promised to give us this explicit proclamation.

It is a mania with every man who wants to be looked upon as a statesman to produce a proclamation, in fact he does not consider himself entitled to the name of statesman until he has. His proclamation is issued and received by the people, who read it and see in it the sanction of some power or other, which they either obey or disobey according to their individual

views of politics. Unfortunately, this proclamation, upon which Odilon was counting greatly, demonstrated the fact that the Préfet of the Seine took a middle course, which offended at the same time both the Court party and the Republicans. We will reproduce it here in its entirety. Be it understood that our readers are free to read only the sentences in italics, or to pass it over altogether unread—

"Citizens, your magistrates are deeply distressed at the disorders which have recently been disturbing the public peace, at a time when commerce and industry, which are in much need of protection, are beginning to rise above a long crisis of depression.

"*It is not vengeance that this people of Paris, who are the bravest and most generous in the world, are demanding, but justice!* Justice, in fact, is a right, a necessity, to strong men; vengeance is but the delight of the weak and cowardly. *The proposition of the Chamber is an* INOPPORTUNE STEP *calculated to make the people imagine that there is a concerted design to interfere with the ordinary course of justice with respect to the ex-ministers.* Delays have arisen, which are merely the carrying out of those forms which surround justice with greater solemnity of character; and these delays but sanction and strengthen the opinion *of which our ungovernable enemies, ever lying in wait to disunite us*, persistently take advantage. Hence has arisen that popular agitation, which men of rectitude and good citizens regard as an actual mistake. I swear to you in all good faith, fellow-citizens, that the course of justice has neither been suspended, nor interrupted, nor will it be. The preparation of the accusation brought against the ex-ministers still continues: *they have come under the law and the law alone shall decide their fate.*

"No good citizen could wish or demand anything else; and yet cries of "death" are uttered in the streets and public places; but what are such instigations, such placards, but violent measures against justice? We merely desire to do as we would ourselves be done by, namely, be judged dispassionately and impartially. Well, there are certain misguided or malevolent persons who threaten the judges before the trial has begun. People of Paris, you will not stand by such violent conduct; the accused should be sacred in your eyes; they are placed under the protection of the law; to insult them,

to hinder their defence, to anticipate the decrees of justice, is to violate the laws of every civilised society; it is to be wanting in the first principles of liberty; it is worse than a crime; it is cowardly! There is not a single citizen among this great and glorious people who cannot but feel that it is his honoured duty to prevent an outrage that will be a blot upon our Revolution. Let justice be done! But violence is not justice. And this is the cry of all well-meaning people, and will be the principle guiding the conduct of our magistrates. Under these grave circumstances they will count upon the concurrence and the assistance of all true patriots to uphold the measures that are taken to bring about public order."

This proclamation is, perhaps, a little too lengthy and diffuse and tedious; but we should remember that Odilon Barrot was a barrister before he became Préfet of the Seine. However, in the midst of this ocean of words, a flood of language by which the préfet had, perhaps, hoped that the king would be mystified, His Majesty noted this sentence—"*The proposal of the Chamber was an inopportune step leading people to suppose it was a concerted thing. . . .*" And the Republicans caught hold of this one—*Our ungovernable enemies, ever on the watch to disunite us*," etc.

The step that the Préfet of the Seine blamed was the king's own secret wish, interpreted by the address of the Chamber; so that, by finding fault with the address of the Chamber, the Préfet of the Seine allowed himself to blame the secret wish of the king.

From that moment, the fall of the Préfet of the Seine was decided upon. How could Louis-Philippe, with his plans for reigning and governing at the same time, keep a man in his service who dared to find fault with his own secret wishes? It was useless for M. Odilon Barrot to try to deceive himself; from that hour dates the king's dislike to him: it was that proclamation of 1830, which postponed his three hours' ministry to 1848. Then, on the other hand, he broke with the Republican party because he spoke of them as his *ungovernable enemies*.

The same night, or the day after the appearance of this

proclamation, Godefroy Cavaignac cast Odilon Barrot's horoscope in these pregnant words—

"My dear friend, you are played out!"

This is what really passed at the Palais-Royal. The king was furious with the audacity of the *pettifogging little lawyer*. The *little lawyer*, however, was to take his revenge for this epithet two years later, by annulling the sentence on the young artist Geoffroy, who had been illegally condemned to death by the court-martial that had been instituted on account of the state of siege at the time. It was a splendid and noble method of being revenged, which won back for Odilon ten years popularity! So his fall was decided at the Palais-Royal. But it was not a matter that was very painful to the ministry which was in power in November 1830; this was composed only of M. Molé, a deserter from the Napoleonic camp; of M. de Broglie, a deserter from the Royalist camp; of M. Guizot, the man of the *Moniteur de Gand*; M. Casimir Périer, the banker *whose bank closed at four o'clock*, and who, up to the last, had struggled against the Revolution; M. Sébastiani, who, on the 30th, had announced that the white flag was his standard; and finally, General Gérard, the last minister of Charles X., who, to keep in power, had only had to get the Ordinance, which the flight of the Elder Branch left blank, signed by the Younger Branch. It will be understood that none of these men had the least personal attachment to Odilon Barrot. So, when the king proposed the dismissal of the Préfet of the Seine, they all unanimously exclaimed, "Just as you wish, seigneur!" Only one voice cried, "*Veto!*" that of Dupont (de l'Eure). Now, Dupont had this one grand fault in the eyes of politicians (and the king was the foremost politician of his day), he persisted in sticking both to his own opinions and to his friends.

"If Odilon Barrot goes, I also depart!" said the honest old man flatly.

This was a more serious matter, for if the withdrawal of Odilon Barrot involved that of Dupont (de l'Eure), the withdrawal of Dupont would also mean that of La Fayette with him. Now, La Fayette's resignation might very well, in the

end, involve that of the king himself. It would, moreover, cause ill-feeling between the king and Laffitte, who was another staunch friend of Odilon Barrot. True, the king was not disinclined for a rupture with Laffitte: there are certain services so great that they can only be repaid by ingratitude; but the king only wished to quarrel with Laffitte in his own time and at his own convenience, when such a course would be expedient and not prejudicial. The grave question was referred to a consensus of opinion for solution.

M. Sébastiani won the honours of the sitting by his suggestion of himself making a personal application to M. Odilon Barrot to obtain his voluntary resignation. Of course, Dupont (de l'Eure) was not present at this secret confabulation. They settled to hold another council that night. The king was late, contrary to his custom. As he entered the cabinet, he did not perceive Dupont (de l'Eure) talking in a corner of the room with M. Bignon.

"Victory, messieurs!" he exclaimed, in an exulting voice; "the resignation of the Préfet of the Seine is settled, and General La Fayette, realising the necessity for the resignation, himself consented to it."

"What did you say, sire?" said Dupont (de l'Eure) hastily, coming out of the darkness into the circle of light which revealed his presence to the king.

"Oh! you are there, are you, Monsieur Dupont," said the king, rather embarrassed. "Well, I was saying that General La Fayette has ceased to oppose the resignation of M. Barrot."

"Sire," replied Dupont, "the statement your Majesty has done me the honour to make is quite impossible of belief."

"I had it from the general's own lips, monsieur," replied the king.

"Your majesty must permit me to believe he is labouring under a mistake," insisted Dupont, with a bow; "for the general told me the very reverse, and I cannot believe him capable of contradicting himself in this matter."

A flash of anger crossed the king's face; yet he restrained himself.

"However," continued Dupont, "I will speak for myself alone . . . If M. Odilon Barrot retires, I renew my request to the king to be good enough to accept my resignation."

"But, monsieur," said the king hastily, "you promised me this very morning, that whatever happened, you would remain until after the trial of the ministers."

"Yes, true, sire, but only on condition that M. Barrot remained too."

"Without any conditions, monsieur."

It was now Dupont's turn to flush red.

"I must this time, sire," he said, "with the strength of conviction, positively assert that the king is in error."

"What! monsieur," exclaimed the king, "you give me the lie to my face? Oh! this is really too much! And everybody shall hear how you have been lacking in respect to me."

"Take care, sire," replied the chancellor coldly; "when the king says *yes* and Dupont (de l'Eure) says *no*, I am not sure which of the two France will believe."

Then, bowing to the king, he proceeded to the door of exit.

But on the threshold the unbending old man met the Duc d'Orléans, who was young and smiling and friendly; he took him by both hands and would not let him go further.

"Father," said the duke to the king, "there has surely been some misunderstanding . . . M. Dupont is so strictly honourable that he could not possibly take any other course."

The king was well aware of the mistake he had just made, and held out his hand to his minister; the Duc d'Orléans pushed him into the king's open arms, and the king and his minister embraced. Probably nothing was forgotten on either side, but the compact was sealed.

Odilon Barrot was to remain Préfet of the Seine, and, consequently, Dupont (de l'Eure) was to remain chancellor, and La Fayette, consequently, would remain generalissimo of the National Guard throughout the kingdom.

But we shall see how these three faithful friends were politely

dismissed when the king had no further need of them. It will, however, readily be understood that all this was but a temporary patching up, without any real stability underneath. M. Dupont (de l'Eure) consented to remain with MM. de Broglie, Guizot, Molé and Casimir Périer, but these gentlemen had no intention whatever of remaining in office with him. Consequently, they sent in their resignation, which involved those of MM. Dupin and Bignon, ministers who held no offices of state.

The king was placed in a most embarrassing quandary, and had recourse to M. Laffitte. M. Laffitte urged the harm that it would do his banking house, and the daily work he would be obliged to give to public affairs, if he accepted a position in the Government, and he confided to the king the worry which the consequences of the July Revolution had already caused him in his business affairs. The king offered him every kind of inducement. But, with extreme delicacy of feeling, M. Laffitte would not hear of accepting anything from the king, unless the latter felt inclined to buy the forest of Breteuil at a valuation. The only condition M. Laffitte made to this sale was that it should be by private deed and not publicly registered, as registration would naturally reveal the fact of the sale and the seller's difficulties. They exchanged mutual promises, and the forest of Breteuil was valued at, and sold for, eight millions, I believe, and the private deeds of sale and purchase were executed and signed upon this basis.

M. Laffitte's credit thus made secure, he consented to accept both the office of Minister for Finance and the Presidency of the Cabinet Council.

The *Moniteur* published, on 2 November, the list of newly elected ministers. They were—MM. Laffitte, for Finance and President of the Council; Dupont (de l'Eure), Minister of Justice; Gérard, for War; Sébastiani, at the Admiralty; Maison, for Foreign Affairs; Montalivet, at the Home Office; Mérilhou, for Education.

The king, therefore, had attained his end; *the doctrinaires* (as they were nicknamed, probably because they had no real

political principles) had done him great service by their resignation, and given him the opportunity of forming a ministry entirely devoted to him. In the new coalition, Louis-Philippe ranked Laffitte as *his friend*, Sébastiani and Montalivet, as his devoted servants; Gérard and Maison, his subservient followers; while Mérilhou fell an easy prey to his influence. There was only Dupont (de l'Eure) left, and he took his cue from La Fayette.

Now, do not let us lose sight of the fact that this ministry might be called *the Trial Ministry* (*ministère du procès*), and that La Fayette, who had been proscribed by M. de Polignac, wanted to take a noble revenge upon him by saving his life. His speech in the Chamber did not leave the slightest doubt of his intentions.

On 4 October, the Chamber of Peers constituted itself a Court of Justice, ordered the removal of the ex-ministers to the prison of the petit Luxembourg and fixed 15 December for the opening of the trial. But between 4 October and 15 December (that is to say, between the constitution of the Court of Peers and the opening of the trial) M. Laffitte received the following curt note from Louis-Philippe:—

"My dear Monsieur Laffitte,—After what has been told me by a mutual friend, of whom I need not say anything further, you know quite well why I have availed myself, at M. Jamet's[1] urgent instigation, to whom the secret of the purchase was entrusted by yourself and not by me, of taking the opportunity of having the private deed of sale registered, as secretly as possible.—Yours affectionately, Louis-Philippe"

M. Laffitte was stunned by the blow; he did not place any belief in the secrecy of the registration; and he was right. The sale became known, and M. Laffitte's downfall dated from that moment. But the deed of sale bore a special date! M. Laffitte took up his pen to send in his resignation, and this involved that of Dupont (de l'Eure), La Fayette and Odilon Barrot. He reflected that Louis-Philippe would be disarmed

[1] M. Jamet was the king's private book-keeper.

in face of a future political upheaval. But the revenge appeared too cruel a one to the famous banker, who now acted the part of king, while the real king played that of financier. Nevertheless, the wound rankled none the less deeply in his heart.

CHAPTER III

Béranger as Patriot and Republican

WHEN Laffitte became minister, he wanted to bear with him up to the political heights he was himself compelled to ascend, a man who, as we have said, had perhaps contributed more to the accession of Louis-Philippe even than had the celebrated banker himself. That man was Béranger. But Béranger, with his clear-sighted common sense, realised that, for him as well as for Laffitte, apparent promotion really meant ultimate downfall. He therefore let all his friends venture on that bridge of Mahomet, as narrow as a thread of flax, called power; but shook his head and took farewell of them in the following verses:—

"Non, mes amis, non, je ne veux rien être;
Semez ailleurs places, titres et croix.
Non, pour les cours Dieu ne m'a point fait naître:
Oiseau craintif, je fuis la glu des rois!
Que me faut-il? Maîtresse à fine taille,
Que me faut-il? Maîtresse à fine taille,
Petit repas et joyeux entretien!
De mon berceau près de bénir la paille,
En me créant, Dieu m'a dit: 'Ne sois rien!

Un sort brillant serait chose importune
Pour moi rimeur, qui vis de temps perdu.
N'est-il tombé, des miettes de fortune,
Tout bas, j'ai dit: 'Ce pain ne m'est pas dû.
Quel artisan, pauvre, hélas! quoi qu'il fasse,
N'a plus que moi droit à ce peu de bien?
Sans trop rougir, fouillons dans ma besace.
En me créant, Dieu m'a dit: 'Ne sois rien!'

Sachez pourtant, pilotes du royaume,
Combien j'admire un homme de vertu
Qui, désertant son hôtel ou son chaume,
Monte au vaisseau par tous les vents battu,
De loin, ma vois lui crie : 'Heureux voyage !'
Priant de cœur pour tout grand citoyen ;
Mais, au soleil, je m'endors sur la plage
En me créant, Dieu m'a dit : 'Ne sois rien !'

Votre tombeau sera pompeux sans doute ;
J'aurai, sous l'herbe, une fosse à l'écart.
Un peuple en deuil vous fait cortége en route ;
Du pauvre, moi, j'attends le corbillard.
En vain l'on court ou votre étoile tombe ;
Qu'importe alors votre gîte ou le mien?
La différence est toujours une tombe.
En me créant, Dieu m'a dit : 'Ne sois rien !'

De ce palais souffrez donc que je sorte,
A vos grandeurs je devais un salut ;
Amis, adieu ! j'ai, derrière la porte,
Laissé tantôt mes sabots et mon luth.
Sous ces lambris, près de vous accourue,
La Liberté s'offre à vous pour soutien . . .
Je vais chanter ses bienfaits dans la rue.
En me créant, Dieu m'a dit : 'Ne sois rien !'"

So Béranger retired, leaving his friends more deeply entangled in the web of power than was La Fontaine's raven in the sheep's wool. Even when he is sentimental, Béranger finds it difficult not to insert a touch of mischief in his poetry, and, perhaps, while he is singing in the street the blessings of liberty, he is laughing in his sleeve; exemplifying that disheartening maxim of La Rochefoucauld, that there is always something even in the very misfortunes of our best friends which gives us pleasure. Yet how many times did the philosophic singer acclaim in his heart the Government he had founded. We say *in his heart*, for whether distrustful of the stability of human institutions, or whether he deemed it a good thing to set up kings, but a bad one to sing their praises in poetry, Béranger never, thank goodness! consecrated by a single line of praise

in verse the sovereignty of July which he had lauded in his speech.

Now let us take stock of the length of time his admiration of, and sympathy with, the royal cause lasted. It was not for long! In six months all was over; and the poet had taken the measure of the king: the king was only fit to be put away with Villon's old moons. If my reader disputes this assertion let him listen to Béranger's own words. The man who, on 31 July, had flung *a plank across the stream*, as the *petits Savoyards* do, is the first to try to push it off into the water; it is through no fault of his if it do not fall in and drag the king with it.

"Oui, chanson, muse, ma fille,
J'ai déclaré net
Qu'avec Charle et sa famille,
On le détrônait;
Mais chaque loi qu'on nous donne
Te rappelle ici :
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

Je croyais qu'on allait faire
Du grand et du neuf,
Même étendre un peu la sphère
De quatre-vingt-neuf;
Mais point : on rebadigeonne
Un troûe noirci !
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

Depuis les jours de décembre,[1]
Vois, pour se grandir,
La chambre vanter la chambre,
La chambre applaudir !
A se prouver qu'elle est bonne,
Elle a réussi . . .
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

[1] We shall talk about these directly, but, desiring to dedicate a chapter or two now to Béranger, who, as poet and politician, took a great part in the Revolution of July, we are obliged to take a step in advance.

Basse-cour des ministères
Qu'en France on honnit,
Nos chapons héréditaires,
Sauveront leur nid ;
Les petits que Dieu leur donne
Y pondront aussi . . .
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

La planète doctrinaire
Qui sur Gand brillait
Vent servir la luminaire
Aux gens de juillet :
Fi d'un froid soleil d'automne
De brume obscurci !
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

Nos ministres, qu'on peut mettre
Tous au même point,[1]
Voudraient que la baromètre
Ne variât point :
Pour peu que là-bas il tonne,
On se signe ici . . .
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

Pour être en état de grâce
Que de grands peureux
Ont soin de laisser en place
Les hommes véreux !
Si l'on ne touche à personne,
C'est afin que si . . .
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

Te voilà donc restaurée,
Chanson mes amours !
Tricolore et sans livrée,
Montre-toi toujours !

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[1] What would have become of Béranger if he had followed the power of the ministers who could be put all on the same level? For notice that the ministers he speaks of here are his friends, who did not send in their resignation till 13 March.

Ne crains plus qu'on l'emprisonne,
Du moins à Poissy . . .
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci !

Mais, pourtant, laisse en jachère
Mon sol fatigué ;
Mes jeunes rivaux, ma chère,
Ont un ciel si gai !
Chez eux la rose foisonne,
Chez moi le souci.
Chanson, reprends ta couronne !
—Messieurs, grand merci ! "

These verses were nothing short of a declaration of war, but they escaped unnoticed, and those poets who talked of them seemed to talk of them as of something fallen from the moon, or some aerolite that nobody had picked up.

A song of Béranger? What was it but a song by him? The public had not read this particular one, though it was aware of the existence of a poet of that name who had written *Le Dieu des bonnes gens*, *L'Ange Gardien*, *Le Cinq mai*, *Les Deux Cousins*, *Le Ventru*, all songs that more or less attacked Louis XVIII. and Charles X.; but they did not recognise a poet of the name of Béranger who allowed himself to go so far as to attack Louis-Philippe. Why this ignorance of the new Béranger? Why this deafness as to his new song? We will explain.

There comes a reactionary period after every political change, during which material interests prevail over national, and shameful appetites over noble passions; during such a period, —as Louis-Philippe's reign, for example—that government is in favour which fosters these selfish interests and surfeits ignoble passions. The acts of such a government, no matter how outrageously illegal and tyrannical and immoral, are looked upon as saving graces! They praise and approve them, and make as much noise at the footstool of power, as the priests of Cybele, who clashed their cymbals round Jupiter's cradle. Throughout such a period as this, the only thing the masses

fear, who, living by such a reaction, have every interest in upholding it, is, lest daylight break on the scene of Pandemonium, and light shine into the sink where speculators and money-makers and coiners of crowns and paper money jostle, and crowd and hustle one another amid that jingling of money which denotes the work they are engaged in. Whether such a state of things lasts long or only briefly, we repeat that, while it endures until an honest, pure and elevated national spirit gets the upper hand, nothing can be done or said or hoped for; everything else is cried up and approved and extolled beforehand! It is as though that fine popular spirit which inspires nations from time to time to attempt great deeds has vanished, has gone up to the skies, or one knows not where. Weaker spirits despair of ever seeing it come back, and nobler minds alone, who share its essence, know that it ever lives, as they possess a spark of that divine soul, believed to be extinct, and they wait with smiling lips and calm brow. Then, gradually, they witness this political phenomenon. Without apparent cause, or deviation from the road it had taken, perhaps for the very reason that it is still pursuing it, such a type of government, which cannot lose the reputation it has never had, loses the factitious popularity it once possessed; its very supporters, who have made their fortunes out of it, whose co-operation it has rewarded, gradually fall away from it, and, without disowning it altogether, already begin to question its stability. From this very moment, such a government is condemned; and, just as they used to approve of its evil deeds, they criticise its good actions. Corruption is the very marrow of its bones and runs through it from beginning to end and dries up the deadly sap which had made it spread over a whole nation, branches like those of the upas tree, and shade like that of the manchineel. Into this atmosphere, which, for five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, has been full of an impure element that has been inhaled together with other elements of the air, there comes something antagonistic to it, something not immediately recognised. This is the returning spirit of social probity, entering the political con-

science; it is the soul of the nation, in a word, that was thought to have fainted, risen to the sky, gone, no one knew where, which comes back to reanimate the vast democratic masses, which it had abandoned to a lethargy that surrounding nations, jealous and inimical, had been all too eager to proclaim as the sleep of death! At such a crisis the government, by the mere returning of the masses to honesty, seems like a ship that has lost its direction, which staggers and wavers and knows not where it is going! It has withstood fifteen years of tempests and storms and now it founders in a squall. It had become stronger by 5 and 6 June, on 13 and 14 April and 15 May, but falls before 24 February.

Such a government or rather governments show signs of their decline when men of heart and understanding refuse to rally to their help, or when those who had done so by mistake quit it from disgust. It does not follow that these desertions bring about an immediate fall—it may not be for years after, but it is a certain sign that they will fall some day, alone, or by their own act, and the public conscience, at this stage of their decline, needs but to give it a slight push to complete the ruin!

Now Béranger, with his fine instinct of right and wrong, of good and evil, knew all this; not in the self-saving spirit of the rat which leaves the ship where it has fattened, when it is about to sail. As we have seen, he would receive nothing at the hands of the Government or from the friends who formed its crew; but, like the swift, white sea-bird, which skims the crests of the rising waves, he warned the sailors of coming storms. From this very moment, Béranger decides that royalty in France is condemned, since this same royalty, which he has kneaded with his own hands, with the democratic element of a Jacobin prince in 1791, a commandant of the National Guard, a Republican in 1789 and a popular Government in 1830, is turning to a middle-class aristocracy, the last of the aristocracies, because it is the most selfish and the most narrow-minded,—and he dreams of a Republic!

But how was he to attack this popular king, this king of the

bourgeois classes and of material interests, the king who had saved society? (Every form of government in France as it arose has made that claim!) The king was invulnerable; the Revolution of '89, which was looked upon as his mother, but was only his nurse, had dipped him in the furnace of the Three Days, as Thetis dipped her son Achilles in the river Styx; but he, too, had his weak spot like Homer's hero.

Is it the head? Is it the heel? Is it the heart? The poet, who will not lose his time in manufacturing gunpowder, which might easily be blown away, before it was used, will look for this weak spot, and, never fear, he will find it.

CHAPTER IV

Béranger, as Republican

THIS vulnerable spot was the Republican feeling, ever alert in France, whether it be disguised under the names of Liberalism, Progress or Democracy. Béranger discovered it, for, just when he was going to bid farewell to poetry, he once more took up his song; like the warrior who, in despair, had flung down his arms, he resumed them; but he has changed his aim and will slay with principles rather than bullets, he will no longer try to pierce the velvet of an ancient throne, but he will set up a new statue of marble upon a brazen altar! That statue shall be the figure of the Republic. He who was of the advanced school under the Elder Branch, hangs back under the Younger. But what matters it! He will accomplish his task and, though it stand alone, it will be none the less powerful. Listen to him: behold him at his moulding: like Benvenuto Cellini, he flings the lead of his old cartridges into the smelting-pot: he will throw in his bronze and even the two silver dinner-services which he brings out of an old walnut chest on grand occasions when he dines with Lisette, and which he has once or twice lent to Frétillon to put in pawn. While he works, he discovers that those whom he fought in 1830 were in the right, and that it was he himself who was wrong; he had looked upon them as *madmen*, now he makes his frank apologies to them in this song—

"Vieux soldats de plomb que nous sommes,
Au cordeau nous alignant tous,
Si des rangs sortant quelques hommes,
Tous, nous crions: 'A bas les fous!'

On les persécute, on les tue,
Sauf, après un lent examen,
A leur dresser une statue
Pour la gloire du genre humain ! .

Combien de tempo une pensée.
Vierge obscure, attend son époux !
Les sots la traitent d'insensée,
Le sage lui dit : 'Cachez-vous !'
Mais, la rencontrant loin du monde,
Un fou qui croit au lendemain
L'épouse ; elle devient féconde,
Pour le bonheur du genre humain !

J'ai vu Saint-Simon, le prophète,
Riche d'abord, puis endetté,
Qui, des fondements jusqu'au faite,
Refaisait la société.
Plein de son œuvre commencée,
Vieux, pour elle il tendais la main,
Sur qu'il embrassait la pensée
Qui doit sauver le genre humain !

Fourier nous dit : 'Sors de la fange,
Peuple en proie aux déceptions !
Travaille, groupé par phalange,
Dans un cercle d'attractions.
La terre, après taut de désastres,
Forme avec le ciel un hymen,
Et la loi qui régit les astres
Donne la paix au genre humain !'

Enfantin affranchit la femme,
L'appelle à partager nos droits.
'Fi ! dites-vous, sous l'épigramme
Ces fous rêveurs tombent tous trois !'
Messieurs, lorsqu'en vain notre sphère
Du bonheur cherche le chemin,
Honneur au fou qui ferait faire
Un rêve heureux au genre humain !

Qui découvrit un nouveau monde ?
Un fou qu'on raillait en tout lieu !
Sur la croix, que son sang inonde,
Un fou qui meurt nous lègue un Dieu !

Si, demain, oubliant d'élcore,
Le jour manquait, eh bien ! demain,
Quelque fou trouverait encore
Un flambeau pour le genre humain ! "

You have read this song. What wonderful sense and rhythm of thought and poetry these lines contain ! You say you didn't know it ? Really ? and yet you knew all those which, under Charles x., attacked the throne or the altar. *Le Sacre de Charles le Simple*, and *L'Ange Gardien*. How is it that you never knew this one ? Because Béranger, instead of being a tin soldier drawn up to defend public order, as stock-jobbers and the bourgeois and grocers understand things, was looked upon as one of those fanatics who leave the ranks in pursuit of mad ideas, which they take unto themselves in marriage and perforce therefrom bring forth offspring ! Only, Béranger was no longer in sympathy with public thought ; the people do not pick up the arrows he shoots, in order to hurl them back at the throne ; his poems, which were published in 1825, and again in 1829, and then sold to the extent of thirty thousand copies, are, in 1833, only sold to some fifteen hundred. But what matters it to him, the bird of the desert, who sings for the love of singing, because the good God, who loves to hear him, who prefers his poetry to that of *missionaries, Jesuits and of those jet-black-dwarfs* whom he nourishes, and who hates the smoke of their censers, has said to him, "Sing, poor little bird, sing !" So he goes on singing at every opportunity.

When Escousse and Lebras died, he sang a melancholy song steeped in doubt and disillusionment ; he could not see his way in the chaos of society. He only felt that the earth was moving like an ocean ; that the outlook was stormy ; that the world was in darkness, and that the vessel called *France* was drifting further and further towards destruction. Listen. Was there ever a more melancholy song than this ? It is like the wild seas that break upon coasts bristling with rocks and covered with heather, like the bays of Morlaix and the cliffs of Douarnenez.

"Quoi ! morts tous deux dans cette chambre close
Où du charbon pèse encor la vapeur !
Leur vie, hélas ! etait à peine éclose ;
Suicide affreux ! triste objet de stupeur !
Ils aurout dit : 'Le monde fait naufrage ;
Voyez pâlir pilote et matelots !
Vieux bâtiment usé par tous les flots,
Il s'engloutit, sauvous-nous à la nage !'
Et, vers le ciel se frayant un chemin,
Ils sont partis en se donnant la main !
. . . . . .
Pauvres enfants ! quelle douleur amère
N'apaisent pas de saints devoirs remplis ?
Dans la patrie on retrouve une mère,
Et son drapeau vous couvre de ses plis !
Ils répondaient : 'Ce drapeau, qu'on escorte,
Au toit du chef le protège endormi ;
Mais le soldat, teint du sang ennemi,
Veille, et de faim meurt en gardant la porte !'
Et, vers le ciel se frayant un chemin,
Ils sont partis en se donnant la main !
. . . . . .
Dieu créateur, pardonne à leur démence !
Ils s'étaient fait les échos de leurs sous,
Ne sachant pas qu'en une chaîne immense,
Non pour nous seuls, mais pour tous nous naissons.
L'humanité manque de saints apôtres
Qui leur aient dit : 'Enfants, suivez ma loi !
Aimer, aimer, c'est être utile à soi !
Se faire aimer, c'est être utile aux autres !'
Et, vers le ciel se frayant un chemin,
Ils sont partis en se donnant la main !"

At what a moment,—consider it !—did Béranger prophesy that the world would suffer shipwreck to the terror of pilots and sailors? When, in February 1832, the Tuileries was feasting its courtiers; when the newspapers, which supported the Government, were glutted with praise; when the citizen-soldiers of the rues Saint-Denis and Saint-Martin were enthusiastic in taking their turn on guard; when officers were clamouring for crosses for themselves and invitations to court for their wives; when, out of the thirty-six millions of the French people, thirty millions were bellowing at the top of

their voices, "Vive Louis-Philippe, the upholder of order and saviour of society!" when the *Journal des Débats* was shouting its HOSANNAHS! and the *Constitutionnel* its AMENS!

By the powers! One would have been out of one's mind to die at such a time; and only a poet would talk of the world going to wrack and ruin!

But wait! When Béranger perceived that no one listened to his words, that, like Horace, he sang to deaf ears, he still went on singing, and now still louder than before—

"Société, vieux et sombre édifice,
Ta chute, hélas! Menace nos abris:
Tu vas crouler! point de flambeau qui puisse
Guider la foule à travers tes débris:
Où courons-nous! Quel sage en proie au doute
N'a sur son front vingt fois passé la main?
C'est aux soleils d'être sûrs de leur route;
Dieu leur a dit: 'Voilà votre chemin!'"

Then comes the moment when this chaos is unravelled, and the night is lifted, and the dawn of a new day rises; the poet bursts into a song of joy as he sees it! What did he see? Oh! be not afraid, he will be only too ready to tell you—

"Toujours prophète, en mon saint ministère,
Sur l'avenir j'ose interroger Dieu.
Pour châtier les princes de la terre,
Dans l'ancien monde un déluge aura lieu.
Dèja près d'eux, l'Océan, sur les grèves,
Mugit, se gonfle, il vient . . . . 'Maîtres, voyez,
Voyez!' leur dis-je. Ils répondent: 'Tu rêves!'
Ces pauvres rois, ils seront tous noyés!
. . . . . .
Que vous ont fait, mon Dieu, ces bons monarques?
Il en est tant dont on bénit les lois!
De jougs trop lourds si nous portons les marques,
C'est qu'en oubli le peuple a mis ses droits.
Pourtant, les flots précipitent leur marche
Contre ces chefs jadis si bien choyés.
Faute d'esprit pour se construire une arche,
Ces pauvres rois, ils seront tous noyés!
. . . . . .

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'Un océan ! quel est-il, ô prophète ?'
Peuples, c'est nous, affranchis de la faim,
Nous, plus instruits, consommant la défaite
De tant de rois, inutiles, enfin ! . . .
Dieu fait passer sur ces fils indociles
Nos flots mouvants, si longtemps fourvoyés ;
Puis le ciel brille, et les flots sont tranquilles.
Ces pauvres rois, ils seront tous noyés !"

It will be observed that it was not as in *les Deux Cousins*, a simple change of fortune or of dynasty, but the overturning of every dynasty that the poet is predicting; not as in *Les Dieu des bonnes gens*, the changing of destinies and tides, but the revolution of both towards ultimate tranquillity. The ocean becomes a vast lake, without swell or storms, reflecting the azure heavens and of such transparent clearness that at the bottom can be seen the corpses of dead monarchies and the débris of wrecked thrones.

Then, what happens on the banks of this lake, in the capital of the civilised world, in the city *par excellence*, as the Romans called Rome? The poet is going to tell you, and you will not have long to wait to know if he speaks the truth: a hundred and sixty-six years, dating from 1833, the date at which the song appeared. What is a hundred and sixty-six years in the life of a people? For, note carefully, the prophecy is for the year 2000, and the date may yet be disputed!

"Nostradamus, qui vit naître Henri-Quatre,
Grand astrologue, a prédit, dans ses vers,
Qu'*en l'an deux mil, date qu'on peut débattre*,
De la médaille on verrait le revers :
Alors, dit-il, Paris, dans l'allégresse,
Au pied du Louvre oultra cette voix :
'Heureux Français, soulagez ma détresse ;
Faites l'aumône au dernier de vos rois !'

Or, cette voix sera celle d'un homme
Pauvre, à scrofule, en haillons, sans souliers,
Qui, *né proscrit*, vieux, arrivant de Rome,
Fera spectacle aux petits écoliers.

Un sénateur criera : 'L'homme à besace,
Les mendiants sont bannis par nos lois !
—Hélas ! monsieur, je suis seul de ma race ;
Faites l'aumône au dernier de vos rois ! '

'Es-tu vraiment de la race royale ? '
—Oui, répondra cet homme, fier encor ;
J'ai vu dans Rome, alors ville papale,
A mon aïeul couronne et sceptre d'or ;
Il les vendit pour nourrir le courage
De faux agents, d'écrivains maladroits !
Moi, j'ai pour sceptre un bâton de voyage. . . .
Faites l'aumône au dernier de vos rois !

'Mon père, âgé, *mort en prison pour dettes*,
D'un bon métier n'osa point me pouvoir ;
Je tends la main . . . Riches, partout vous êtes
Bien durs au pauvre, et Dieu me l'a fait voir !
Je foule enfin cette plage féconde
Qui repoussa mes aïeux tant de fois !
Ah ! par pitié pour les grandeurs du monde,
Faites l'aumône au dernier de vos rois ! '

Le sénateur dira : 'Viens ! je t'emmène
Dans mon palais ; vis heureux parmi nous.
Contre les rois nous n'avons plus de haine ;
Ce qu'il en reste embrasse nos genoux !
En attendant que le sénat décide
A ses bienfaits si ton sort a des droits,
Moi, qui suis né d'un vieux sang régicide,
Je fais l'aumône au dernier de nos rois ! '

Nostradamus ajoute en son vieux style :
'La *République* au prince accordera
Cent louis de rente, et, citoyen utile,
Pour maire, un jour, Saint-Cloud le choisira.
Sur l'an deux mil, on dira dans l'histoire,
Qu'assise au trône et des arts et des lois,
La France, en paix, reposant sous sa gloire,
A fait l'aumône au dernier de ses rois ! '"

It is quite clear this time, and the word *Republic* is pronounced ; the *Republic* in the year 2000 will give alms to the last of its kings ! There is no ambiguity in the prophecy.

Now, how long will this Republic, strong enough to give alms to the last of its kings, have been established? It is a simple algebraic calculation which the most insignificant mathematician can arrive at, by proceeding according to rule, from the known to the unknown.

It is in the year 2000 that Paris will hear, at the foot of the Louvre, the voice of a man in tatters shouting, "Give alms to the last of your kings!"

This voice will belong to a man *born an outlaw, old, arriving from Rome*; which leads one to suppose he would be about sixty or seventy years of age. Let us take a mean course and say sixty-five . . . . . @ 65

This man, a born outlaw, *saw in Rome, then a papal city, the crown and golden sceptre of his grandfather.* How long ago can that have been? Let us say fifty years . . . . . @ 50

For how long had this grandfather been exiled? It cannot have been long, because he had his sceptre and gold crown still, and sold them to *feed the courage of false agents and luckless writers.* Let us reckon it at fifteen years and say no more about it . . . . . @ 15

Let us add to that the twenty years that have rolled by since 1833 . . . . . @ 20

And we shall have to take away a total from 166 of 150

Now he who from 166 pays back 150 keeps 16 as remainder, —and yet, and yet the poet said the year 2000 is *open to doubt.* Do not let us dispute the question, but let us even allow more time.

We return thee thanks, Béranger, thou poet and prophet!

What happened upon the appearance of these prophecies which were calculated to wound many very different interests? That the people who knew the old poems of Béranger by heart, because their ambition, their hopes and desires, had

made weapons of them wherewith to destroy the old throne, did not even read his new songs, whilst those who did read them said to each other, "Have you read Béranger's new songs? No. Well, don't read them. Poor fellow, he is going off!" So they did not read them, or, if they had read them, the word was passed round to say, that the song-writer was going off. No, on the contrary, the poet was growing greater, not deteriorating! But just as from song-writer he had become poet, so, from poet, he was becoming a prophet. I mean that to the masses, he was becoming more and more unintelligible. Antiquity has preserved us the songs of Anacreon, but has forgotten the prophecies of Cassandra.

And why? Homer tells us: the Greeks refused to put faith in the prophetic utterances of the daughter of Priam and Hecuba.

Alas! Béranger followed her in this and held his peace; and a whole world of masterpieces on the eve of bursting forth was arrested on his silent lips. He smiled with that arch smile of his, and said—

"Ah! I am declining, am I? Well, then, ask my songs of those who are rising!"

Rossini had said the same thing after *Guillaume Tell*, and what was the result? We had no more operas from him, and no more songs from Béranger.

Now it may be asked how it happens that Béranger, a Republican, resides peacefully in the avenue de Chateaubriand (No. 5), at Paris, whilst Victor Hugo is in Marine Terrace, in the island of Jersey. It is simply a question of age and of temperament. Hugo is a few and scarcely fifty: while Béranger, take him all in all, is Epicurean and, moreover, seventy years of age;[1] an age which a man begins to prepare his bed for his eternal sleep, and Béranger (God grant he may live many years yet! he but accept some years of our lives!) wishes to look carefully upon the bed of flowers and bay leaves that he has made for himself. He has earned the right to do so. He has struggled hard

[1] See Note A, at end of volume.

enough in the past, and, rest assured, his work will continue in the future!

Let us just say, in conclusion, that those who were then spoken of as the *young school* (they are now men of forty to fifty) were not fair to Béranger. After Benjamin Constant had exalted him to the rank of a great epic poet, they tried to reduce him to the level of a writer of doggerel verses. By this action, criticism innocently made itself the accomplice of the ruling powers; it only intended to be severe, but was, really, both unjust and ungrateful! It needs to be an exile and a poet living in a strange land, far from that communion of thought which is the food of intellectual life, to know how essentially French, philosophical and consolatory, the muse of the poet of Passy really was. In the case of Béranger, there was no question of exile, and each exile can, while he sings his songs, look for the realisation of that prophecy which Nostradamus has fixed for the year 2000.

But we are a very long way from the artillery, which we were discussing, and we must return to it again and to the riot in which it was called upon to play its part.

Let us, then, return to the riot and to the artillery. But, dear Béranger, dear poet, dear father, we do not bid you *adieu*, only *au revoir*. After the storm, the halcyon!—the halcyon, white as snow, which has passed through all the storms, its swan-like plumage as spotless as before.

CHAPTER V

Death of Benjamin Constant—Concerning his life—Funeral honours that were conferred upon him—His funeral—Law respecting national rewards—The trial of the ministers—Grouvelle and his sister—M. Mérilhou and the neophyte—Colonel Lavocat—The Court of Peers—Panic—Fieschi

THE month of December 1830 teemed with events. One of the gravest was the death of Benjamin Constant. On the 10th we received orders to be ready equipped and armed by the 12th, to attend the funeral procession of the famous deputy. He had died at seven in the evening of 8 December. His death created a great sensation throughout Paris. Benjamin Constant's popularity was a strange one, and it would be hard to say upon what it was founded. He was a Swiss Protestant, and had been brought up in England and Germany. He could speak English, German and French with equal ease; but he composed and wrote in French. He was young, good-looking, strong in body, but weak in character. From the time he set foot in France, Constant did nothing unless under the influence of women: they were his rulers in literature and his guides in politics. He was taken up by three of the most celebrated women of his time; by Madame Tallien, Madame de Beauharnais and Madame de Staël, and he was completely under their influence; the latter, especially, had an immense influence over his life. *Adolphe* was he himself, and the heroine in it was Madame de Staël. Besides, the life of Benjamin was not by any means the life of a man, but that of a woman, that is to say, a mixture of inconsistencies and weaknesses. Raised to the Tribunal after the overturning of the Directory, he opposed Bonaparte when he

was First Consul, not, as historians state, because he had no belief in the durability of Napoleon's good fortune, but because Madame de Staël, with whom he was then on most intimate terms, detested the First Consul. He was expelled from the Tribunal in 1801, and exiled from France in 1802, and went to live near his mistress (or rather master) at Coppet. About the year 1806 or 1807 this life of slavery grew insufferable to him, and, weak though he was, he broke his chains. Read his novel *Adolphe*, and you will see how heavily the chain galled him! He settled at Hanover, where he married a German lady of high birth, a relative of the Prince of Hardenberg, and behold him an aristocrat, moving in the very highest aristocratic circles in Germany, never leaving the princes of the north, but living in the heart of the coalition which threatened France, directing foreign proclamations, writing his brochure, *De l'esprit de conquête et d'usurpation*, upon the table of the Emperor Alexander; and, finally, re-entering France with Auguste de Staël, in the carriage of King Charles-John. How can one escape being a Royalist in such company!

He was also admitted to the *Journal des Débats*, and became one of the most active editors of that periodical. When Bonaparte landed at the gulf of Juan and marched on Paris, Benjamin Constant's first impulse was to take himself off. He began by hiding himself at the house of Mr. Crawford, ex-ambassador to the United States; then he went to Nantes with an American who undertook to get him out of France. But, on the journey, he learned of the insurrection in the West and retraced his steps and returned to Paris after a week's absence. In five more days' time, he went to the Tuileries at the invitation of M. Perregaux, where the emperor was awaiting an audience with him in his private room. Benjamin Constant was to be bought by any power that took the trouble to flatter him; he was in politics, literature and morality what we will call a courtezan, only Thomas, of the *National*, used a less polite word for it. Two days later, the newspaper announced the appointment of Benjamin Constant as a

member of the State Council. Here it was that he drew up the famous *Acte additionnel* in conjunction with M. Molé, a minister whom we had just thrown out of Louis-Philippe's Government. At the Second Restoration, it was expedient for Benjamin Constant to get himself exiled; and it regained him his popularity, so great was the public hatred against the Bourbons! He went to England and published *Adolphe*. In 1816, the portals of France were re-opened to him and he started the *Minerve*, and wrote in the *Courrier* and *Constitutionnel* and in the *Temps*. I met him at this time at the houses of Châtelain and M. de Seuven. He was a tall, well-built man, excessively nervous, pale and with long hair, which gave his face a strangely Puritanical expression; he was as irritable as a woman and a gambler to the pitch of infatuation! He had been a deputy since 1819, and each day he was one of the first arrivals at the Chamber, punctiliously clad in uniform, with its silver fleurs-de-lis, and always, summer and winter, carrying a cloak over his arm; his other hand was always full of books and printer's proofs; he limped and leant upon a sort of crutch, stumbling along frequently till he reached his seat. When seated, he began upon his correspondence and the correcting of his proofs, employing every usher in the place to execute his innumerable commissions. Ambitious in all directions, without ever succeeding in anything, nor even getting into the Academy, where he failed in his first attempt against Cousin, and in the second against M. Viennet! by turns irresolute and courageous, servile and independent, he spent his ten years as deputy under every kind of vacillation. The Monday of the Ordinances he was away in the country, where he had been undergoing a serious operation; he received a letter from Vatout, short and significant—

"My dear Friend,—A terrible game is being played here with heads as stakes. Be the clever gambler you always are and come and bring your own head to our assistance."

The summons was tempting and he went. On the Thursday, he reached Montrouge, where the barricades

compelled him to leave his carriage and to cross Paris upon the arm of his wife, who was terrified when she saw what men were guarding the Hôtel de Ville, and frightened her husband as well as herself.

"Let us start for Switzerland instantly!" exclaimed Benjamin Constant; "and find a corner of the earth where not even the cover of a newspaper can reach us!"

He was actually on the point of doing so when he was recognised, and some one called out "Vive Benjamin Constant!" lifted him in his arms and carried him in triumph. His name was placed last on the list of the protest of the deputies, and is to be found at the end of Act 30, conferring the Lieutenant-generalship upon the Duc d'Orléans; these two signatures, supported by his immense reputation and increasing popularity, once more took him into the State Council. Meanwhile, he was struggling against poverty, and Vatout induced the king to allow him two hundred thousand francs, which Constant accepted on condition, so he said to him who gave him this payment, that he was allowed the right of free speech. That's exactly how I understand it, said the king. At the end of four months, the two hundred thousand francs were all gambled away, and Constant was poorer than ever. A fortnight before his death, a friend went to his house, one morning at ten o'clock, and found him eating dry bread, soaked in a glass of water. That crust of bread was all he had had since the day before, and the glass of water he owed to the Auvergnat who had filled his cistern that morning. His death was announced to the Chamber of Deputies on 9 December.

"What did he die of?" several members asked.

And a melancholy accusing voice that none dared contradict replied—

"Of hunger!"

This was not quite the truth, but there was quite enough foundation for the statement to be allowed to pass unchallenged.

Then they set to work to arrange all kinds of funeral celebrations; they brought in a bill respecting the honours

Just as the bill had been introduced the day after M. de Tracy's proposition with respect to the death penalty, this bill was adopted the day before the trial of the ex-ministers. It was as good as saying—"You dead, what more can you lay claim to? We have given your widows, fathers, mothers and sisters pensions! You, who live, what more can you want? We have made you non-commissioned officers and sub-lieutenants and given you the Cross! You would not have enjoyed such privileges if the ministers of Charles x. had not passed the Ordinances; therefore praise them instead of vilifying them!"

But the public was in no mood to praise Polignac and his accomplices; instead, it applauded the Belgian revolution and the Polish insurrection. All eyes were fixed upon the Luxembourg. If the ministers were acquitted or condemned to any other sentence than that of death, the Revolution of July would be abjured before all Europe, and by the king who won his crown by means of the barricades.

Mauguin, one of the examining judges, when questioned concerning the punishment that ought to be served to the prisoners, replied unhesitatingly—"Death!"

Such events as the violation of our territory by the Spanish army; the death of Benjamin Constant and refusal to allow his body to be taken to the Panthéon; the Belgian revolution and Polish insurrection; were so many side winds to swell the storm which was gathering above the Luxembourg.

On 15 December, two days after the vote upon the National Pensions Bill, and two days before its promulgation in the *Moniteur*, the prosecutions began. The trial lasted from the 15th to the 21st; for six days we never changed our uniform. We did not know what we were kept in waiting for; we were rallied together several times, either at Cavaignac's or Grouvelle's, to come to some decision, but nothing definite was proposed, beyond that our common centre should be the Louvre, where our arms and ammunition were stored, and that we should be guided by circumstances and act as the impulse of the moment directed.

I have already had occasion to mention Grouvelle; but let us dwell for a moment upon him and his sister. Both were admirable people, with hearts as devoted to the cause of Republicanism as any Spartan or Roman citizens. We shall meet them everywhere and in everything connected with politics until Grouvelle disappears from the arena, at the same time that his sister dies insane in the hospice de Montpellier. They were the son and daughter of the Grouvelle who made the first complete edition of the *Lettres de Madame de Sévigné*, and the same who, as secretary of the Convention, had read to Louis XVI. the sentence of death brought him by Garat. At the time I knew him, Grouvelle was thirty-two or three, and his sister twenty-five, years of age. There was nothing remarkable in his external appearance; he was very simply dressed, with a gentle face and scanty fair hair, and upon his scalp he wore a black band, no doubt to hide traces of trepanning. She, too, was fair and had most lovely hair, with blue eyes below white eyelashes, which gave an extremely sweet expression to her face, an expression, however, which assumed much firmness if you followed the upper lines to where they met round her mouth and chin. A charming portrait of herself hung in her house, painted by Madame Mérimée, the wife of the artist who painted the beautiful picture, *l'Innocence et le Serpent*; the mother of Prosper Mérimée, author of *Le Vase Étrusque*, *Colomba*, *Vénus d'Ile* and of a score of novels which are all of high merit. The mother of Laure Grouvelle was a Darcet, sister, I believe, of Darcet the chemist, who had invented the famous joke about gelatine; consequently, she was cousin to the poor Darcet who died a horrible death, being burnt by some new chemical that he was trying to substitute for lamp-oil; cousin also to the beautiful Madame Pradier, who was then simply Mademoiselle Darcet or at most called *madame*. They both had a small fortune, sufficient for their needs, for Laure Grouvelle had none of the usual feminine coquetry about her, but was something akin to Charlotte Corday.

It was a noticeable fact that all the men of 1830 and the

Carbonari of 1821 and 1822 were either wealthy or of independent means, either from private fortunes or industry or talent. Bastide and Thomas were wealthy; Cavaignac and Guinard lived on their incomes; Arago and Grouvelle had posts; Loëve-Weymars possessed talent and Carrel, genius. I could name all and it would be seen that none of them acted from selfish ends, or needed to bring about revolutions to enrich himself; on the contrary, all lost by the revolutions they took part in, some losing their fortunes, others their liberty, some their lives.

Mademoiselle Grouvelle had never married, but it was said that Étienne Arago had proposed to her when she was a young girl; that was a long while back, in 1821 or 1822. Étienne Arago was then, in 1821, a student in chemistry at the École polytechnique, and was about twenty years of age; he made the acquaintance of Grouvelle at Thénard's house. He was a fiery-hearted son of the South; his friends were anxious to make him a propagandist, and through his instrumentality principally, to introduce the secret society of the *Charbonnerie* into the École; Grouvelle, Thénard, Mérilhou and Barthe being its chief supporters.

These germs of Republicanism, sown by the young chemical student, and, even more, by the influence of Eugène Cavaignac, also a student at the École at that time, produced in after life such men as Vanneau, Charras, Lothon, Millotte, Caylus, Latrade, Servient and all that noble race of young men who, from 1830 to 1848, were to be found at the head of every political movement.

A year later, *La Charbonnerie* was recruited by Guinard, Bastide, Chevalon, Thomas, Gauja and many more, who were always first in the field when fighting began.

The question of how to introduce the principles of *La Charbonnerie* into Spain in the teeth of the *cordon sanitaire* was being debated, in order to establish relations between the patriots of the army and those who were taking refuge in the peninsula. Étienne Arago was thought of, but as he was too poor to undertake the journey, they went to Mérilhou. Méril-

hou, as I have said, was one of the ringleaders of Charbonarism. He was then living in the rue des Moulins. Cavaignac and Grouvelle introduced Étienne, and Mérilhou gazed at the neophyte, who did not look more than eighteen.

"You are very young, my friend," said the cautious lawyer to him.

"That may be, monsieur," Étienne responded, "but young though I am, I have been a Charbonist for two years."

"Do you realise to what dangers you would expose yourself if you undertook this propagandist mission?"

"Certainly, I do; I expose myself to death on the scaffold."

Whereupon the future minister of Louis-Philippe and peer of France, and presiding judge at the Barbès' trial, laid his hand upon Étienne's shoulder, and said, in the theatrical manner barristers are wont to assume—

"*Macte animo, generose puer!*" And gave him the necessary money.

We shall come across M. Mérilhou again at Barbès' trial, and the *macte animo* will not be thrown away upon us.

For the moment, however, we must go back to the trial of the ministers.

La Fayette had declared his views positively; he had offered himself as guarantee to the High Court; he had sworn to the king to save the heads of the ministers, if they were acquitted. Thereupon ensued a strange revival of popularity in favour of the old general; fear made his greatest enemies sing his praises on all sides; the king and Madame Adélaïde showered favours upon him; he was indispensable; the monarchy could not survive without his support. . . . If Atlas failed this new Olympus, it would be overthrown!

La Fayette saw through it all and laughed to himself and shrugged his shoulders significantly. None of these flatteries and favours had induced him to act as he did, but simply the dictates of his own conscience.

"General," I said to him on 15 December, "you know you are staking your popularity to save the heads of these ministers?"

"My boy," he replied, "no one knows better than I the price to be put upon popularity; it is the richest and most inestimable of treasure, and the only one I have ever coveted; but, like all other treasures, in life, when the moment comes, one must strip oneself to the uttermost farthing in the interest of public welfare and national honour."

General La Fayette certainly acted nobly, much too nobly, indeed, for the deserts of those for whom he made the sacrifice, for they only attributed it to weakness instead of to devotion to duty.

The streets in the vicinity of the Luxembourg were dreadfully congested by the crowds waiting during the trial, so that the troops of the National Guard could scarcely circulate through them. Troops of the line and National Guards were, at the command of La Fayette, placed at his disposition with plenary power; he had the police of the Palais-Royal, of the Luxembourg and of the Chamber of Peers. He had made Colonel Lavocat second in command at the Luxembourg, with orders to watch over the safety of the peers; those same peers who had once condemned Lavocat to death. If he could but have evoked the shade of Ney, he would have placed him as sentinel at the gates of the palace!

Colonel Feisthamel was first in command. Lavocat was one of the oldest members of the Carbonari. Every kind of political party was represented in the crowd that besieged the gates of the Luxembourg, except Orléanist; we all rubbed against one another. Republicans, Carlists, Napoleonists, awaiting events in the hope of being able to further each his own interests, opinions and principles. We had tickets for reserved seats. I was present on the last day but one, and heard the pleading of M. de Martignac and also that of M. de Peyronnet, and I witnessed M. Sauzet's triumph and saw M. Crémieux fall ill.

Just at that second the sound of the beating of drums penetrated right into the Chamber of Peers. They were beating the rappel in a wild sort of frenzy.

I rushed from the hall; the sitting was almost suspended,

half on account of the accident that had happened to M. Crémieux, half because of the terrible noise that made the accused men shiver on their benches and the judges in their seats. My uniform as artilleryman made way for me through the crowds, and I gained the courtyard; it was packed. A coach belonging to the king's printers had come into the principal court and the multitude had angrily rushed in after it. It was the sound of their angry growls combined with the drumming which had reached the hall. A moment of inexpressible panic and confusion succeeded among the peers, and it was quite useless for Colonel Lavocat to shout from the door—

"Have no fear! I will be answerable for everything. The National Guard is and will remain in possession of all the exits."

M. Pasquier could not hear him, and his little thin shrill voice could be heard saying—

"Messieurs les pairs, the sitting is dissolved. M. le Commandant de la Garde Nationale warns me that it will be unwise to hold a night sitting."

It was exactly the opposite of what Colonel Lavocat had said, but, as most of the peers were just as frightened as their illustrious president, they rose and left the hall hurriedly, and the sitting was deferred until the morrow.

As I went out I pushed against a man who seemed to be one of the most furious of the rioters; he was shouting in a foreign accent and his mouth was hideous and his eyes were wild.

"Death to the ministers!" he was yelling.

"Oh! by Jove!" I said to the chief editor of *The Moniteur*, a little white-haired man called Sauvo, who, like myself, was also watching him. "I bet twenty-five louis that that man is a spy!"

I don't know whether I was right at the time; but I do know that I found the very same man again five years later in the dock of the Court of Peers. He was the Corsican Fieschi.

CHAPTER VI

The artillerymen at the Louvre—Bonapartist plot to take our cannon from us—Distribution of cartridges by Godefroy Cavaignac—The concourse of people outside the Luxembourg when the ministers were sentenced—Departure of the condemned for Vincennes—Defeat of the judges—La Fayette and the riot—Bastide and Commandant Barré on guard with Prosper Mérimée

I RETURNED to the Louvre to learn news and to impart it. It is quite impossible to depict the excitement which reigned in this headquarters of the artillery. Our chief colonel, Joubert, had been taken away from us, and, as the choice of a colonel was not in our hands, he had been replaced by Comte Pernetti.

Comte Pernetti was devoted to the court, and the court, with just cause, mistrusted us, and looked for a chance to disband us.

But we, on our side, every minute kept meeting men whom we had seen upon the barricades, who stopped us to ask—

"Do you recognise us? We were there with you. . . ."

"Yes, I recognise you. What then?"

"Well, if it came to marching against the Palais-Royal as we did against the Tuileries, would you desert us?"

And then we clasped hands and looked at one another with excited eyes and parted, the artillerymen exclaiming—

"The people are rising!" While the populace repeated to one another, "The artillery is with us!"

All these rumours were floating in the air, and seemed to stop like mists at the highest buildings.

The Palais-Royal was only a hundred and fifty yards from the Louvre, in which were twenty-four pieces of artillery, twenty

thousand rounds of ammunition, and out of eight hundred artillerymen six hundred were Republicans.

No scheme of conspiracy had been arranged; but it was plainly evident that, if the people rose, the artillery would support them. M. de Montalivet, brother of the minister, warned his brother, about one o'clock that afternoon, that there was a plot arranged for carrying off our guns from us. General La Fayette immediately warned Godefroy Cavaignac of the information that had been given him.

Now, we were quite willing to go with the people to manage our own guns, and incur the risks of a second revolution, as we had run the risks of the first; but the guns were, in a measure, our own property, and we felt responsible for their safe keeping, so we did not incline to have them taken out of our hands.

This rumour of a sudden attack upon the Louvre gained the readier credence as, for two or three days past, there had been much talk of a Bonapartist plot; and, although we were all ready to fight for La Fayette and the Republic, we had no intentions of risking a hair of our heads for Napoleon II. Consequently, Godefroy Cavaignac, being warned, had brought in a bale of two or three hundred cartridges, which he flung on one of the card-tables in the guardroom. Every man then proceeded to fill his pouch and pockets. When I reached the Louvre, the division had been made, but it did not matter, as my pouch had been full since the day I had been summoned to seize the Chamber.

As would be expected, we had no end of spies among us, and I could mention two in particular who received the Cross of the Légion d'honneur for having filled that honourable office in our ranks.

An hour after this distribution of cartridges they were warned at the Palais-Royal. A quarter of an hour after they had been warned there, I received a letter from Oudard, begging me, if I was at the Louvre, to go instantly to his office. I showed the letter to our comrades and asked them what I was to do.

"Go, of course," answered Cavaignac.

"But if they question me——?"

"Tell the truth. If the Bonapartists want to seize our guns we will fire our last cartridges to defend them; but, if the people rise against the Luxembourg, *or even against any other palace*, we will march with them."

"That suits me down to the ground. I like plain speaking."

So I went to the Palais-Royal. The offices were crowded with people; one could feel the excitement running through from the centre to the outlying extremities, and, judging from the state of agitation of the extremities, the centre must have been very much excited. Oudard questioned me; that was the only reason why he had sent for me. I repeated what Cavaignac had told me, word for word. As far as I can recollect, this happened on the evening of the 20th. On the 21st I resumed my post in the rue de Tournon. The crowd was denser than ever: the rue de Tournon, the rues de Seine, des Fossés-Monsieur-le-Prince, Voltaire, the places de l'Odéon, Saint-Michel and l'École-de-Médecine, were filled to overflowing with National Guards and troops of the line. The National Guard had been made to believe that there was a plot for plundering the shops; that the people of the July Revolution, when pulled up by the appointment of the Duc d'Orléans to the Lieutenant-generalship, had vowed to be revenged; now, the bourgeois, ever ready to believe rumours of this kind, had rushed up in masses and uttered terrible threats against pillagers, who had never pillaged either on the 27th, the 28th, or the 29th, but who would have pillaged on the 30th, if the creation of the Lieutenant-generalship had not restored order just in time.

It is but fair to mention that all those excellent fellows, who were waiting there, with rifles at rest, would not have put themselves out to wait unless they had really believed that the trial would end in a sentence of capital punishment.

About two o'clock it was announced that the counsels' speeches were finished and the debates closed, and that sentence was going to be pronounced. There was an intense

silence, as though each person was afraid that any sound might prevent him from hearing the great voice, that, no doubt, like that of the angel of the day of judgment, should pronounce the supreme sentence of that High Court of Justice.

Suddenly, some men rushed out of the Luxembourg and dashed down the rue de Tournon crying—

"To death! They are sentenced to death!"

A stupendous uproar went up in response from every ray of that vast constellation of streets that centres in the Luxembourg.

Everybody struggled to make a way out to his own quarter and house to be the first to carry the bitter news. But they soon stayed their progress and the multitude seemed to be driven back again and to press towards the Luxembourg like a stream flowing backwards. Another rumour had got abroad; that the ministers, instead of being condemned to death, had only been sentenced to imprisonment for life; and that the report of the penalty of death had been purposely spread to give them a chance to escape.

The expression of people's faces changed and menacing shouts began to resound; the National Guards struck the pavements with the butt-end of their rifles. They had come to defend the peers but seemed quite ready when they heard the news of the acquittal (and any punishment short of death was acquittal) to attack the peers.

Meanwhile, this is what was happening inside. It was known beforehand, in the Palais-Royal, that the sentence was to be one of imprisonment for life. M. de Montalivet, Minister of the Interior, had received orders from the king to have the ex-ministers conducted safe and sound to Vincennes. The firing of a cannon when they had crossed the drawbridge of the château was to tell the king of their safety. M. de Montalivet had chosen General Falvier and Colonel Lavocat to share this dangerous honour with him. When he saw the four ministers appearing, who had been removed from the hall in order that, according to custom, sentence should be pronounced in their absence—

"Messieurs," said General Falvier to Colonel Lavocat,

"take heed! we are going to make history; let us see to it that it redounds to the glory of France!"

A light carriage awaited the prisoners outside the wicket-gate of the petit Luxembourg. It was at this juncture that some men, set there by M. de Montalivet, rushed through the main gateway, shouting, as we have mentioned—

"Death. . . . They are sentenced to death!"

The prisoners could hear the tremendous shout of triumph that went up at that false report. But the carriage, surrounded by two hundred horsemen, had already set off, and was driving towards the outlying boulevards with the speed and noise of a hurricane.

MM. de Montalivet and Lavocat galloped at each side of the doors.

The judges assembled in the Rubens gallery to deliberate. From there, they could see, as far as eye could reach, the bristling of cannons and bayonets and the seething agitation of the crowds. Night was fast approaching, but the inmates of every house had put lamps in their windows and a bright illumination succeeded the waning daylight, adding a still more lurid character to the scene.

Suddenly, the peers heard an uproar; they saw, one might almost say they *felt*, the terrible agitation going on outside: each wave of that sea, that had broken or was just ready to break, rose higher than the last; and the tide that one thought was at the ebb, returned with greater and more threatening force than ever, beating against the powerfully built walls of the Médicis palace: but the judges were fully aware that no walls or barriers or ramparts could stand against the strength of the ocean; they each tried to find some pretext or other for slipping away: some did not even attempt any excuse for so doing. M. Pasquier, by comparison, was the bravest, and felt ashamed of their retreat.

"It is unseemly!" he exclaimed; "shut the doors!"

But La Layette was informed, at the same time, that the people were rushing upon the palace.

"Messieurs," he said, turning to the three or four persons

who awaited his commands, "will you come with me to see what is going on?"

Thus, whilst M. Pasquier was returning to the audience chamber, which was nearly deserted, to pronounce, by the dismal light of a half-lighted chandelier, the sentence condemning the accused to imprisonment for life and punishing the Prince de Polignac to civil death, the man of 1789 and of 1830 was making his appearance in the streets, as calm on that 21 December, as he announced to the people the quasi-absolution of the ex-ministers, as he had been forty years before, when he announced, to the fathers of those who were listening to him then, the flight of the king to Varennes.

For a single instant it seemed as though the noble old man had presumed too much on the magnanimity of the crowd and on his popularity: for the waves of that ocean which, at first, made way respectfully before him, now gathered round him angrily. A threatening growl ran through the multitude, which knew its power and had but to make a move to grind everything to powder or smash everything like glass.

Cries of "Death to the ministers! Put them to death! Put them to death!" were uttered on all sides.

La Fayette tried to speak but loud imprecations drowned his voice.

At last he succeeded in being heard, and, "Citizens, I do not recognise among you the heroes of July!" he said to the people.

"No wonder!" replied a voice; "how could you, seeing you were not on their side!"

It was a critical moment; there were only four or five of us artillerymen all together. M. Sarrans, who accompanied the general, signed to us to come up to him, and thanks to our uniform, which the people held in respect as a sign of the opposition party, we managed to make our way to the general, who, recognising me, took me by the arm; other patriots joined us, and La Fayette found himself surrounded by a party of friends, amongst whom he could breathe freely.

But, on all sides, the National Guards were furious, and were

deserting their posts, some loading their rifles, others flinging them down and all crying out treason.

At this moment, the sound of a cannon pierced the air like the explosion of a thunderbolt. It was M. de Montalivet's signal announcing to the king that the ministers were in safety; but we in our ignorance, thought it was a signal sent us by our comrades in the Louvre; we left the general and, drawing our poinards, we rushed across the Pont Neuf, crying: "To arms!" At our shouts and the sight of our uniform and the naked swords, the people opened way for us at once and soon began running in all directions, yelling: "To arms!" We reached the Louvre just as the porters were closing the gates and, pushing back both keepers and gates, we entered by storm. Let them shut the gates behind us, once inside what would it matter? There were about six hundred artillery-men inside the Louvre. I flew into the guardroom on the left of the entrance by the gateway in the place Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois.

The news of the discharge of the ministers was already known and had produced its effect. Every one looked as though he were walking upon a volcano. I saw Adjutant Richy go up to Bastide and whisper something into his ear.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Bastide.

"See for yourself, then," Richy added.

Bastide went out hurriedly and, almost immediately after, we heard him shout: "Help, men of the Third Artillery!"

But before he had time to cross the threshold of the guard-room he had climbed over the park chains and was making straight for a group of men, who, in spite of the sentry's orders, had got into the enclosure reserved for the guns.

"Out of the park!" shrieked Bastide; "out of the park instantly or I will put my sword through the bodies of every one of you!"

"Captain Bastide," said one of the men to whom he had addressed his threat, "I am Commandant Barré . . ."

"If you are the very devil himself it makes no difference!

Our orders are that no one shall enter the park, so out you go!"

"Excuse me," said Barré, "but I should much like to know who is in command here, you or I?"

"Whoever is the stronger commands here at present. . . . I do not recognise you. . . . Help, artillerymen!"

Fifty of us surrounded Bastide with poinards in hand. Several had found time to take their loaded muskets from their racks. Barré gave in to us.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"To take any gun that comes handiest and make it ready for firing!" exclaimed Bastide.

We flung ourselves on the first that came; but, at the third revolution of the wheels, the washer broke and the wheel came off.

"I want you to fetch me the linch-pins of the guns you have just carried off."

"Really . . ."

"Those linch-pins, or, I repeat, I will pass my sword through your body!"

Barré emptied a sack in which some ten linch-pins had been already put. We rushed at them and put our guns in order again.

"Good," said Bastide. "Now, out of the park!"

Every one of them went out and Barré went straight off to offer his command to Comte Pernetti, who declined to take it.

Bastide left me to keep guard over the park with Mérimée: our orders were to fire on anybody who came near it, and who, at our second *qui vive*, did not come up at command.

From that hour on sentry-duty (they had reduced the length of sentry hours to one, on account of the gravity of events) dated my acquaintance with Mérimée; we conversed part of the time, and strange to say, under those circumstances, of art and literature and architecture.

Ten years later, Mérimée, who, no doubt, recollecting what he had wished to tell me that night, namely, that I had the most dramatic imagination he had ever come across, thought

fit to suggest to M. de Rémusat, then Minister of the Interior, that I should be asked to write a comedy for the Théâtre-Français.

M. de Rémusat wrote to ask me for a play, enclosing an order for an advance of five thousand francs. A month afterwards, *Un Mariage sous Louis XV.* was composed, read and rejected by the Théâtre-Français. In due order, I will relate the story of *Un Mariage sous Louis XV.* (the younger brother of *Antony*) at greater length; it proved as difficult to launch as *Antony*. But, meanwhile, let us return to that night at the Louvre.

CHAPTER VII

We are surrounded in the Louvre courtyard—Our ammunition taken by surprise—Proclamation of the Écoles—Letter of Louis-Philippe to La Fayette—The Chamber vote of thanks to the Colleges—Protest of the École polytechnique—Discussion at the Chamber upon the General Commandership of the National Guard—Resignation of La Fayette — The king's reply — I am appointed second captain

DURING my hour on sentry-go, a great number of artillerymen had come in; we were almost our full complement. Some, cloaked in mantles, had gained entrance by the gate on the Carrousel side, although we had been told it had been closed by order of the Governor of the Louvre. We were afterwards assured that the Duc d'Orléans was among the number of the cloaked artillerymen; doubtless, with his usual courage, he wanted to judge for himself of the temper of the corps to which he was attached. Just as I re-entered the guardroom, everything was in a frightful state of commotion; it looked as though the battle was going to break out in the midst of the very artillery itself, and as though the first shots would be exchanged between brothers-in-arms. One artilleryman, whose name I have forgotten, jumped up on a table and began to read a proclamation that he had just drawn up: it was an appeal to arms. Scarcely had he read a line before Grille de Beuzelin, who belonged to the reactionary party, snatched it from his hands and tore it up. The artilleryman drew his dagger and the affair would probably have ended tragically, when one of our number rushed into the guardroom, shouting—

"We are surrounded by the National Guard and troops of the line!"

There was a simultaneous cry of "To our guns!"

To make a way through the cordon that surrounded us did not disconcert us at all, for we had more than once vied in skill and quickness with the artillerymen of Vincennes. Moreover, at the first gunshot in Paris, as we knew very well, the people would rally to our side. They had come to see what terms we could offer. The artillerymen who were not of our opinion had withdrawn to that portion of the Louvre nearest the Tuileries: there were about a hundred and fifty of them. Unfortunately, or, rather, fortunately, we learned all at once that the cellars where we kept our ammunition were empty. The Governor of the Louvre, foreseeing the events that I have just related, had had it all taken away during the day. We had therefore no means of attack or defence beyond our muskets and six or eight cartridges per man. But these means of defence would seem to have been formidable enough to make them do nothing more than surround us. We spent the night in expectation of being attacked at any moment. Those of us who slept did so with their muskets between their legs. The day broke and found us still ready for action. The situation gradually turned from tragedy to comedy: the bakers, wine-sellers and pork-butchers instantly made their little speculation out of the position of things and assured us we should not have to surrender from famine. We might be compared to a menagerie of wild beasts shut up for the public safety. The resemblance was the more striking when the people began to gaze at us through the barred windows. Amongst those who came were friends who brought us the latest news. Drums were beating in every quarter—though that was not news to us, for we could hear them perfectly well for ourselves—but the drummers *did not grow tired.*

Up to noon, the situation of the king, politically, was serious; at that hour no decision had been arrived at either for or against him.

General La Fayette had, however, published this proclamation—

"*Order of the Day*, 21 *December*

"The Commander-in-Chief is unable to find words to express the feelings of his heart in order to show to his brethren in arms of the National Guard and of the line his admiration and his gratitude for the zeal, the steadiness and the devotion they displayed during the painful events of yesterday. He was quite aware that his confidence in their patriotism would be justified on every occasion; but he regrets exceedingly the toils and discomforts to which they are exposed; he would gladly forestall them but he can only share them. We all of us feel equally the need of protecting the capital against its enemies and against anarchy, of assuring the safety of families and property, of preventing our revolution from being stained by crimes and our honour impugned. We are all as one man jointly and severally answerable for the carrying out of these sacred duties; and, amidst the sorrow which yesterday's disorders and those promised for to-day cause him, the Commander-in-Chief finds great consolation and perfect security in the kindly feelings he bears towards his brave and dear comrades of liberty and public order.

"La Fayette"

At one o'clock we learnt that students, with cards in their hats, and students from the École in uniform were going all over the town together with the National Guards of the 12th legion, urging all to moderation. At the same time, placards, signed by four students (one from each College), were stuck up on all the walls. Here is the literal rendering of one of them—

"Those patriots who have devoted their lives and labours throughout crises of all kinds to the cause of our independence are still in our midst standing steadfast in the path of liberty; they, in common with others, want large concessions on behalf of liberty; but it is not necessary to use force to obtain them. Let us do things lawfully and then—a more Republican basis will be sought for in all our institutions and we shall obtain it; we shall be all the more powerful if we act openly. *But if these concessions be not granted, then all patriots and students who side with democratic principles will call upon the people to*

insist on gaining their demands. Remember, though, that foreign nations look with admiration upon our Revolution because we have exercised generosity and moderation; let them not say that we are not yet fit to have liberty in our hands, and by no means let them profit by our domestic quarrels, of which they, perhaps, are the authors."

(Then followed the four signatures.)

The parade in the streets of Paris and these placards on every wall about the city had the effect of soothing the public mind. The absence, too, of the artillery, the reason for which they did not know, also contributed to re-establish tranquillity. The king received a deputation from the Colleges with great demonstration of affection, which sent the deputies home delighted, with full assurance that the liberties they longed for were as good as granted. That night the National Guard and troops of the line, who had been surrounding us, fell into rank and took themselves off; and the gates of the Louvre opened behind them. We left the ordinary guard by the cannon and all dispersed to our various homes. Things were settled, at all events, for the time being.

Next day, came an "order of the day" from La Fayette containing a letter from the king. We will put aside the "order of the day" and quote the letter only. We beg our readers to notice the words that are italicised :—

"Tuesday Morning,
"22 *December*

"It is to you I address myself, my dear general, to transmit to our brave and indefatigable National Guard the expression of my admiration for the zeal and energy with which it has maintained public order and prevented all trouble. *But it is you, especially, that I ought to thank, my dear general, you who have just given a fresh example of courage, patriotism and respect for law, in these days of trial, as you have done many times besides throughout your long and noble career.* Express in my name how much I rejoice at having seen the revival of that splendid institution, the National Guard, which had been almost entirely taken away from us, and which has risen up again brilliantly powerful and patriotic, finer and more

numerous than it has ever been, as soon as the glorious Days of July broke the trammels by which its enemies flattered themselves they had crushed it. It is this great institution to which we certainly owe the triumph amongst us of the sacred cause of liberty, which both causes our national independence to be respected abroad, whilst preserving the action of laws from all attack at home. Do not let us forget that there is no liberty without law, and that there can be no laws where any power of whatever kind succeeds in paralysing its action and exalting itself beyond the reach of laws.

"These, my dear general, are the sentiments I beg you to express to the National Guard on my behalf. I count on the continuation of its efforts AND ON YOURS, so that nothing may disturb that public peace which Paris and France need greatly, and which it is essential to preserve. Receive, at the same time, my dear general, the assurance of the sincere friendship you know I hold towards you, LOUIS-PHILIPPE"

As can be seen, on 22 December, the thermometer indicated gratitude.

On the 23rd, upon the suggestion of M. Laffitte, the Chamber of Deputies passed a vote of thanks to the young students, couched in these terms—

"A vote of thanks is given to the students of the College for the loyalty and noble conduct shown by them the day before in maintaining public order and tranquillity."

Unluckily, there was a sentence in M. Laffitte's speech requesting the Chamber to pass this vote of thanks which offended the feelings of the École polytechnique. The phrase was still further emphasised by the remarks he made—

"The three Colleges," the minister said, "which sent deputations to the king displayed very noble sentiments and great courage and entire subjection to law and order, and have given proof of their intentions to make every effort to ensure the maintenance of order."

"On what conditions?" then inquired the deputies, who bore in mind the sentences that we have underlined in the proclamation issued by the Colleges.

"NONE . . . NO CONDITIONS WERE MADE AT ALL," M. Laffitte replied. "*If there were a few individuals who had proposals to make or conditions to offer, such never came to the knowledge of the Government.*"

The next day a protest, signed by eighty-nine students of the Polytechnique, replied to the thanks of the Chamber and to M. Laffitte's denial in the following terms:—

"A portion of the Chamber of Deputies has condescended to pass a vote of thanks to the École polytechnique with reference to certain facts that were *very accurately* reported.

"We, students of the Polytechnique, the undersigned, deny in part these facts and we decline to receive the thanks of the Chamber.

"The students have been traduced, said the protest issued by the School of Law; we have been accused of wishing to place ourselves at the head of malcontent artizans, and of obtaining by brute force the consequences of principles for which we have sacrificed our very blood.

"We have solemnly protested, we who paid cash for the liberty they are now haggling over; we preached public order, without which liberty is impossible; but we did not do so in order to procure the thanks and applause of the Chamber of Deputies. No, indeed! we only fulfilled our duty. Doubtless, we ought to be proud and elated at the gratitude of France, but we look in vain for France in the Chamber of Deputies, and we repudiate the praises offered us, the condition of which is the assumed disavowal of a proclamation, the terms and meaning whereof we unhesitatingly declare that we adopt in the most formal manner."

Of course, the Minister for War at once arrested these eighty-nine students, but their protest had been issued, and the conditions under which they had consented to support the Government were kept to themselves. It will, therefore, be seen that the harmony between His Majesty Louis-Philippe and the students of the three Colleges was not of long duration. It was not to last much longer either between His Majesty and poor General La Fayette, for whom he now had no further use. He had staked his popularity during the troubles in December

and had lost. From that time, he was of no more use to the king, and what was the good of being kind to a useless person? Two days after that on which La Fayette received the letter from the king, thanking him for his past services and expressing the hope for the *continuance of those services*, the Chamber proposed this amendment to Article 64 of the law concerning the National Guard, which the deputies had under discussion—

"As the office of commander-general of the National Guard of the kingdom will cease with the circumstances that rendered the office necessary, that office can never be renewed without the passing of a fresh law, and no one shall be appointed to hold the position without such a special law."

This simply meant the deposition of General La Fayette. The blow was the more perfidious as he was not present at the sitting. His absence is recorded by this passage from the speech which M. Dupin made in support of the amendment—

"I regret that our illustrious colleague is not present at the sitting; he would himself have investigated this question; he would, I have no doubt, have declared, as he did at the Constituent Assembly, that the general command of the regiments of the National Guard throughout the kingdom is an impossible function which he would describe as dangerous."

M. Dupin forgot that the Constituent Assembly, at any rate, had had the modesty to wait until the general sent in his resignation. Now, perhaps it will be said that it was the Chamber which took the initiative, and that the Government had nothing to do with this untoward blow given on the cheek of the living programme going on at the Hôtel de Ville. This would be a mistake. Here is an article of the bill which virtually implied the resignation of La Fayette—

"ARTICLE 50.—In the communes or cantons *where the National Guard will form several legions*, the king may appoint a superior commander; *but a superior commander of the National Guards of a whole department, or even of an arrondissement of a sous-préfecture, cannot be appointed.*"

The next day after that scandalous debate in the Chamber, General La Fayette wrote this letter to the king, in his own handwriting this time, for I have seen the rough draft—

"SIRE,—The resolution passed yesterday by the Chamber of Deputies *with the consent of the king's ministers*, for the suppression of the general commandantship of the National Guards at the very same moment that the law is going to be voted upon, expresses exactly the feeling of the two branches of the legislative power, *and in particular that of the one of which I have the honour of being a member*. I am of opinion that it would be disrespectful if I awaited any formal information before sending in my resignation of the prerogatives entrusted to me by royal command. Your Majesty is aware, and the staff correspondence bill proves the fact, if needful, that the exercise of the office down to the present time has not been such a sinecure as was stated in the Chamber. The king's patriotic solicitude will provide for it, and it will be important, for instance, to set at rest, by Ordinances which the law puts at the king's disposal, the uneasiness that the sub-dividing of the provincial battalions and the fear of seeing the highly valuable institution of the artillery throughout the kingdom confined to garrison or coast towns.

"The President of the Council was so good as to offer to give me the honorary commandership; but he himself and your Majesty will judge that such nominal honours are not becoming to either the institutions of a free country or to myself.

"In respectfully and gratefully handing back to the king the only mandate that gives me any authority over the National Guards, I have taken precautions that the service shall not suffer. General Dumas[1] will take his orders from the Minister of the Interior; General Carbonnel will control the service in the capital until your Majesty has been able to find a substitute, as he, too, wishes to resign.

"I beg your Majesty to receive my cordial and respectful regards, LA FAYETTE"

Louis Blanc, who is usually well informed, said of General La Fayette that he was a gentleman even in his scorn, and took care not to let the monarch detect in his letter his profound feelings of personal injury.

[1] Mathieu Dumas.

He would not have said so if he had seen the letter to which he refers, the one, namely, that we have just laid before our readers. But Louis Blanc may be permitted not to know the contents of this letter, which were kept secret, and only communicated to a few of the General's intimate friends. Louis Philippe sent this reply on the same day—

"My dear General,—I have just received *your letter. The decision you have taken has surprised me as much as it has pained me.* I have not yet had time to read the papers. The cabinet meets at one o'clock; I shall, therefore, be free between four and five, and I shall hope to see you and to be able to induce you to withdraw your decision. Yours, my dear general, etc., Louis-Philippe"

We give this letter as a sequel to that of M. Laffitte, and we give them without commentary of our own; but we cannot, however, resist the desire to point out to our readers that King Louis-Philippe must have read the papers in order to know what was going on in the Chamber, and that at noon on 25 December he had not yet done so! How can anyone think after this proof of the king's ignorance of his ministers' doings that he was anything more than constitutional monarch, reigning but not ruling! But let us note one fact, as M. de Talleyrand remarks on the end of the reign of the Bourbon dynasty, that on 25 December 1830 the political career of General La Fayette was over. Another resignation there was at this time which made less stir, but which, as we shall see on 1 January 1831, had somewhat odd consequences for me; it was given in the same day as General La Fayette's and it was that of one of our two captains of the fourth battery.

As soon as this resignation was known, the artillerymen held a special meeting to appoint another captain and, as the majority of the votes were in favour of me, I was elected second captain. Within twenty-four hours my lace, epaulettes and worsted cordings were exchanged for the same in gold. On the 27th, I took command on parade, clad in the insignia of my new office. We shall soon see how long I was to wear them.

CHAPTER VIII

The Government member—Chodruc-Duclos—His portrait—His life at Bordeaux—His imprisonment at Vincennes—The Mayor of Orgon—Chodruc-Duclos converts himself into a Diogenes—M. Giraud-Savine—Why Nodier was growing old—Stibert—A lesson in shooting—Death of Chodruc-Duclos

LET us bid a truce to politics of which, I daresay, I am quite as tired as is my reader. Let us put on one side those brave deputies of whom Barthélemy makes such a delightful portrait, and return to matters more amusing and creditable. Still, these Memoirs would fail of their end, if, in passing through a period, they did not reveal themselves to the public tinged with the colour of that particular period. So much the worse when that period be dirty; the mud that I have had beneath my feet has never bespattered either my hands or my face. One quickly forgets, and I can hear my reader wondering what that charming portrait is that Barthélemy drew of the deputy. Alas! it is the misfortune of political works; they rarely survive the time of their birth; flowers of stormy seasons, they need, in order to live, the muttering of thunder, the lightning of tempests: they fade when calm is restored; they die when the sun re-appears.

Ah, well! I will take from the middle of *La Némésis* one of those flowers which seem to be dead; and, as all poetry is immortal, I hold that it was but sleeping and that, by breathing upon it, it will come to life again. Therefore, I shall appeal to the poets of 1830 and 1831 more than once.

LE DÉPUTÉ MINISTÉRIEL

" C'était un citoyen aux manières ouvertes,
Ayant un œil serein sous des lunettes vertes;
Il lisait les journaux à l'heure du courrier;
Et, tous les soirs, au cercle, en jouant cœur ou pique,
Il suspendait le whist avec sa philippique
Contre le système Perrier.

Il avait de beaux plans dont il donnait copie;
C'était, de son aveu, quelque belle utopie,
Pièce de désespoir pour tous nos écrivains;
Baume qui guérirait les blessures des villes,
En nous sauvant la guerre et la liste civiles,
Et l'impôt direct sur les vins.

Il disait: 'En prenant mon heureux antidote,
Notre pays sera comme une table d'hôte
Où l'on ne verra plus, après de longs repas,
Quand les repus du centre ont quitté leurs serviettes,
Les affamés venir pour récolter les miettes,
Que souvent ils ne trouvent pas!'

Les crédules bourgeois, que ce langage tente,
Les rentiers du jury, les hommes à patente,
L'écoutaient en disant: 'Que ce langage est beau!
Voilà bien les discours que prononce un digne homme!
Si pour son député notre ville le nomme,
Il fera pâlir Mirabeau!'

Il fut nommé! Bientôt, de sa ville natale,
Il ne fit qu'un seul bond jusqu'à la capitale,
S'installant en garni dans le quartier du Bac.
On le vit à la chambre assis au côté gauche,
Muet ou ne parlant qu'à son mouchoir de poche,
Constellé de grains de tabac.

Grave comme un tribun de notre République,
Parfois il regardait avec un œil oblique
Ce centre où s'endormaient tant d'hommes accroupis.
Quel déchirant tableau pour son cœur patriote!
En longs trépignements les talons de sa botte
Fanaient les roses du tapis.

Lorsque Girod (de l'Ain), qui si mal les préside,
Disait : 'Ceux qui voudront refuser le subside
Se lèveront debout' : le tribun impoli,
Foudroyant du regard le ministre vorace,
Bondissait tout d'un bloc sur le banc de sa place
Comme une bombe à Tivoli.

Quand il était assis, c'était Caton en buste ;
Le peuple s'appuyait sur ce torse robuste ;
De tous les rangs du cintre on aimait à le voir. . .
Qui donc a ramolli ce marbre de Carrare ?
Quel acide a dissous cette perle si rare
Dans la patère du pouvoir ?

Peut-être avez-vous vu, dans le cirque hippodrome,
Martin, l'imitateur de l'Androclès de Rome,
Entre ses deux lions s'avancer triomphant ;
Son œil fascinateur domptait les bêtes fauves ;
Il entrait, sans pâlir, dans leurs sombres alcôves,
Comme dans un berceau d'enfant.

Aujourd'hui, nous avons la clef de ces mystères.
Il se glissait, la nuit, au chevet des panthères ;
Sous le linceul du tigre il étendait la main ;
Il trompait leur instinct dans la nocturne scène,
Et l'animal, sans force, à ce jongleur obscène
Obéissait le lendemain !

Voilà par quels moyens l'Onan du ministère
Énerve de sa main l'homme le plus austère,
Du tribun le plus chaste assouplit la vertu ;
Il vient à lui, les mains pleines de dons infâmes ;
'Que veux-tu ? lui dit-il ; j'ai de l'or, j'ai des femmes,
Des croix, des honneurs ! que veux-tu ?'

Eh ! qui résisterait à ces dons magnifiques ?
Hélas ! les députés sont des gens prolifiques ;
Ils ont des fils nombreux, tous visant aux emplois,
Tous rêvant, jour et nuit, un avenir prospère,
Tous, par chaque courrier, répétant : 'O mon père !
Placez-nous en faisant des lois !'

Et le bon père, ému par ces chaudes missives,
Dépose sur son banc les armes offensives,

Se rapproche du centre, et renonce au combat.
Oh ! pour faire au budget une constante guerre,
Il faudrait n'avoir point de parents sur la terre,
Et vivre dans le célibat !

Ou bien, pour résister à ce coupable leurre,
Il faut aller, le soir, où va Dupont (de l'Eure),
Près de lui retremper sa vertu de tribun ;
Là veille encor pour nous une pure phalange,
Cénacle politique où personne ne mange
Au budget des deux cent vingt-un !"

This *cénacle* referred to our evenings at La Fayette's. Since his resignation, the general was to be found amidst his young, warm and true friends the Republicans, and, more than once, as said Barthélemy, our callow wrath invigorated the patriotism of the two old men.

Another man received his dismissal at the same time as La Fayette: this was Chodruc-Duclos, the Diogenes of the Palais-Royal, the long-bearded man of whom we have promised to say a few words.

One morning, the frequenters of those stone galleries were amazed to see Chodruc-Duclos go by, clad in shoes and stockings, in a coat only a very little worn and an almost new hat! We will borrow the portrait of Chodruc-Duclos from Barthélemy; and complete it by a few anecdotes, gleaned from personal experience, and by others which we believe are new. When the poet has described all those starving people who swarm round the cellars of Véfour and of the Frères-Provençaux, he proceeds to the king of the beggars—Chodruc-Duclos. These are Barthélemy's lines; they depict the man with that happy touch and that faithfulness of description which are such characteristic features of the talented author of *La Némésis*—

"Mais, autant qu'un ormeau s'élève sur l'arbuste,
Autant que Cornuet domine l'homme-buste,[1]

[1] Cornuet occupied one of those literary pavilions which were erected at each end of the garden of the Palais-Royal; the other was occupied by a dwarf who was all body and seemed to crawl on almost invisible legs.

Sur cette obscure plèbe errante dans l'enclos,
Autant plane et surgit l'héroïque Duclos.
Dans cet étroit royaume où le destin les parque,
Les terrestres damnés l'ont élu pour monarque :
C'est l'archange déchu, le Satan bordelais,
Le Juif-Errant chrétien, le Melmoth du palais.
Jamais l'ermite Paul, le virginal Macaire,
Marabout, talapoin, faquir, santon du Caire,
Brahme, Guèbre, Parsis adorateur du feu,
N'accomplit sur la terre un plus terrible vœu !
Depuis sept ans entiers, de colonne en colonne,
Comme un soleil éteint ce spectre tourbillonne ;
Depuis le dernier soir que l'acier le rasa,
Il a vu trois Véfour et quatre Corazza ;
Sous ses orteils, chaussés d'eternelles sandales,
Il a du long portique usé toutes les dalles ;
Etre mystérieux qui, d'un coup d'œil glaçant,
Déconcerte le rire aux lèvres du passant,
Sur tant d'infortunés, in fortune célèbre !
Des calculs du malheur c'est la vivante algèbre.
De l'angle de Terris jusqu'à Berthellemot,
Il fait tourner sans fin son énigme sans mot.
Est-il un point d'arrêt à cette ellipse immense ?
Est-ce dédain sublime, ou sagesse, ou démence ?
Qui sait ? Il vent peut-être, au bout de son chemin,
Par un enseignement frapper le genre humain ;
Peut-être, pour fournir un dernier épisode,
Il attend que Rothschild, son terrestre antipode,
Un jour, dans le palais, l'aborde sans effroi,
En lui disant : 'Je suis plus malheureux que toi !'"

We will endeavour to be the Œdipus to that Sphinx, and guess the riddle, the mystery whereof was hidden for a long time.

Chodruc-Duclos was born at Sainte-Foy, near Bordeaux. He would be about forty-eight when the Revolution of July took place ; he was tall and strong and splendidly built ; his beard hid features that must have been of singular beauty ; but he used ostentatiously to display his hands, which were always very clean. By right of courage, if not of skill, he was looked upon as the principal star of that Pleiades of duellists which flourished at Bordeaux, during the Empire, under the

title of *les Crânes* (Skulls). They were all Royalists. MM. Lercaro, Latapie and de Peyronnet were said to be Duclos' most intimate friends. These men were also possessed of another notable characteristic: they never fought amongst themselves. Duclos was suspected of carrying on relations with Louis XVIII. in the very zenith of the Empire, and was arrested one morning in his bed by the Chief of the Police, Pierre-Pierre. He was taken to Vincennes, where he was kept a prisoner until 1814. Set free by the Restoration, he entered Bordeaux in triumph, and as, during his captivity, he had come into a small fortune, he resumed his old habits and interlarded them with fresh diversions. The Royalist government, which recompensed all its devoted adherents (a virtue that was attributed to it as a crime), would, no doubt, have been pleased to reward Duclos for his loyalty, but it was very difficult to find a suitable way of doing so, for he had the incurable habits of a peripatetic: he was only accustomed to a nomadic life of fencing, political intrigue, theatre-going, women and literature. King Louis XVIII., therefore, could not entrust him with any other public function than that of an everlasting walker, or, as Barthélemy dubbed it, "*Chrétien errant.*"

Unfortunately, money, however considerable its quantity, comes to an end some time. When Duclos had exhausted his patrimony, he recollected his past services for the Bourbon cause and came to Paris to remind them. But he had remembered too late and had given the Bourbons time to forget. The business of soliciting for favours, at all events, exercised his locomotive faculties to the best possible advantage. So, every morning, two melancholy looking pleaders could be seen to cross the Pont Royal, like two shades crossing the river Styx, on their way to beg a good place in the Elysian fields from the minister of Pluto. One was Duclos, the other the Mayor of Orgon. What had the latter done? He had thrown the first stone into the emperor's carriage in 1814, and had come to Paris, stone in hand, to demand his reward. After years of soliciting, these two faithful applicants,

seeing that nothing was to be obtained, each arrived at a different conclusion. The Mayor of Orgon, completely ruined, tied his stone round his own neck and threw himself into the Seine. Duclos, much more philosophically inclined, decided upon living, and, in order to humiliate the Government to which he had sacrificed three years of his liberty, and M. de Peyronnet, with whom he had had many bouts by the banks of the Garonne, bought old clothes, as he had not the patience to wait till his new ones grew old, bashed in the top of his hat, gave up shaving himself, tied sandals over his old shoes, and began that everlasting promenade up and down the arcades of the Palais-Royal which exercised the wisdom of all the Œdipuses of his time. Duclos never left the Palais-Royal until one in the morning, when he went to the rue du Pélican, where he lodged, to sleep, not exactly in furnished apartments, but, more correctly speaking, in *unfurnished* ones. In the course of his promenading, which lasted probably a dozen years, Duclos (with only three exceptions, which we are about to quote, one of them being made in our own favour) never went up to anyone to speak to him, no matter who he was. Like Socrates, he communed alone with his own familiar spirit; no tragic hero ever attempted such a complete monologue!—One day, however, he departed from his habits, and walked straight towards one of his old friends, M. Giraud-Savine, a witty and learned man, as we shall find out later, who afterwards became deputy to the Mayor of Batignolles. M. Giraud's heart stood still with fright for an instant, for he thought he was going to be robbed of his purse; but he was wrong: for Duclos never borrowed anything.

"Giraud," he asked in a deep bass voice, "which is the best translation of Tacitus?"

"There isn't one!" replied M. Giraud.

Duclos shook his treasured rags in sad dejection, then returned, like Diogenes, to his tub. Only, his tub happened to be the Palais-Royal.

On another occasion, whilst I was chatting with Nodier, opposite the door of the café de Foy, Duclos passed and stared

attentively at Nodier. Nodier, who knew him, thought he must want to speak to him, and took a step towards him. But Duclos shook his head and went on his way without saying anything. Nodier then gave me various details of the life of this odd being; after which we separated. During our talk, Duclos had had time to make the round of the Palais-Royal; so, going back by the Théâtre-Français, I met him very nearly opposite the café Corazza. He stopped right in front of me.

"Monsieur Dumas," he said to me, "Do you know Nodier?"

"Very well."

"Do you like him?"

"With all my heart I do."

"Do you not think he grows old very fast?"

"I must confess I agree with you that he does."

"Do you know why?"

"No."

"Well, I will tell you: *Because he does not take care of himself!* Nothing ages a man more quickly than neglecting his health!"

He continued his walk and left me quite stunned; not by his observation, sagacious as it was; but by the thought that it was Chodruc-Duclos who had made it.

The Revolution of July 1830 had, for the moment, interrupted the inveterate habits of two men—Stibert and Chodruc-Duclos.

Stibert was as confirmed a gambler as Duclos was an indefatigable walker. Frascati's, where Stibert spent his days and nights, was closed; the Ordinances had suspended the game of *trente-et-un*, until the monarchy of July should suppress it altogether. Stibert had not patience to wait till the Tuileries was taken: on 28 July, at three in the afternoon, he compelled the concierge at Frascati's to open its doors to him and to play picquet with him. Duclos, for his part, coming from his rooms to go to his beloved Palais-Royal, found the Swiss defending the approaches to it. Some youths had begun a struggle with them, and one of them, armed with a regulation

rifle, was firing on the red-coats with more courage than skill. Duclos watched him and then, growing impatient that anyone should risk his life thus wantonly, he said to the youth—

"Hand me your rifle. I will show you how to use it."

The young fellow lent it him and Duclos took aim.

"Look!" he said; and down dropped a Swiss.

Duclos returned the youth his rifle.

"Oh," said the latter, "upon my word! if you can use it to such good purpose as that, stick to it!"

"Thanks!" replied Duclos, "I am not of that opinion," and, putting the rifle into the youth's hands, he crossed right through the very centre of the firing and re-entered the Palais-Royal, where he resumed his accustomed walk past the bronze Apollo and marble Ulysses, the only society he had the chance of meeting during the 27, 28 and 29 July. This was the third and last time upon which he opened his mouth. Duclos, engrossed as he was with his everlasting walk, would, doubtless, never have found a moment in which to die; only one morning he forgot to wake up. The inhabitants of the Palais-Royal, astonished at having been a whole day without meeting the man with the long beard, learnt, on the following day, from the Cornuet papers, that Chodruc-Duclos had fallen into the sleep that knows no waking, upon his pallet bed in the rue du Pélican.

For three or four years, Duclos, as we have said, had clad himself in garments more like those of ordinary people. The Revolution of July, which exiled the Bourbons, and the trial of the ex-ministers, which ostracised M. de Peyronnet to Ham, removed every reason for his ragged condition, and set a limit to his revenge. In spite of, perhaps even on account of, this change of his outward appearance, Duclos, like Epaminondas, left nothing wherewith to pay for his funeral. The Palais-Royal buried him by public subscription.

General La Fayette resigned his position, and Chodruc-Duclos his revenge. A third notability resigned his life; namely, Alphonse Rabbe, whom we have already briefly mentioned, and who deserves that we should dedicate a special chapter to him.

CHAPTER IX

Alphonse Rabbe—Madame Cardinal—Rabbe and the Marseilles Academy—*Les Massénaires*—Rabbe in Spain—His return—The *Old Dagger*—The Journal *Le Phocéen*—Rabbe in prison—The writer of fables—*Ma pipe*

ALPHONSE RABBE was born at Riez, in the Basses-Alpes. As is the case with all deep and tender-hearted people, he was greatly attached to his own country; he talked of it on every opportunity, and, to believe him, its ancient Roman remains were as remarkable as those of Arles or Nîmes. Rabbe was one of the most extraordinary men of our time; and, had he lived, he would, assuredly, have become one of the most remarkable. Alas! who remembers anything about him now, except Méry, Hugo and myself? As a matter of fact, poor Rabbe gave so many fragments of his life to others that he had not time, during his thirty-nine years, to write one of those books which survive their authors; he whose words, had they been taken down in shorthand, would have made a complete library; he who brought into the literary and political world, Thiers, Mignet, Armaud Carrel, Méry and many others, who are unaware of it, has disappeared from this double world, without leaving any trace beyond two volumes of fragments, which were published by subscription after his death, with an admirable preface in verse by Victor Hugo. Furthermore, in order to quote some portions of these fragments that I had heard read by poor Rabbe himself, compared with whom I was quite an unknown boy (I had only written *Henri III.* when he died), I wanted to procure those two volumes: I might as well have set to work to find Solomon's ring! But I found them at last, where one finds everything, in the rue des

Cannettes, in Madame Cardinal's second-hand bookshop. The two volumes had lain there since 1835; they were on her shelves, in her catalogue, had been on show in the window! but they were not even cut! and I was the first to insert an ivory paper-knife between their virgin pages, after eighteen years waiting! Unfortunate Rabbe; this was the last touch to your customary ill-luck! · Fate seemed ever against him; all his life long he was looking for a revolution. He would have been as great as Catiline or Danton at such a crisis. When 1830 dawned, he had been dead for twenty-four hours! When Rabbe was eighteen, he competed for an academic prize. The subject was a eulogy of Puget. A noble speech, full of new ideas, a glowing style of southern eloquence, were quite sufficient reasons to prevent Rabbe being successful, or from even receiving honourable mention; but, in this failure, his friends could discern the elements of Rabbe's future brilliancy, should Fortune's wheel turn in his favour. Alas! fortune was academic in Rabbe's case, and Rabbe had Orestes for his patron.

Gifted with a temperament that was carried away by the passion of the moment, Rabbe took it into his head to become the enemy of Masséna in 1815. Why? No one ever really knew, not even Rabbe! He then published his *Masséna ires*, written in a kind of prose iambics, in red-hot zeal. This brochure set him in the ranks of the Royalist party. A fortnight later, he became reconciled with the conqueror of Zurich, and he set out on a mission to Spain. From thence dated all poor Rabbe's misfortunes; it was in Spain that he was attacked by a disease which had the sad defect of not being fatal. What was this scourge, this plague, this contagious disease? He shall tell us in his own words; we will not deprive him of his right to give the particulars himself—

"Alas! O my mother, thou couldst not make me invulnerable when thou didst bear me, by dipping me in the icy waters of the Styx! Carried away by a fiery imagination and imperious desires, I wasted the treasures and incense of my youth upon the altars of criminal voluptuousness; pleasure,

which should be the parent of and not the destroyer of human beings, devoured the first springs of my youth. When I look at myself, I shudder! Is that image really myself? What hand has seared my face with those hideous signs? . . . What has become of that forehead which displayed the candour of my once pure spirit? of those bleared eyes, which terrify, which once expressed the desires of a heart that was full of hope and without a single regret, and whose voluptuous yet serious thoughts were still free from shameful trammels? A kindly tolerant smile ever lighted them up when they fell on one of my fellows; but, now, my bold and sadly savage looks say to all: 'I have lived and suffered; I have known your ways and long for death!' What has become of those almost charming features which once graced my face with their harmonious lines? That expression of happy good nature, which once gave pleasure and won me love and kindly hearts, is now no longer visible! All has perished in degradation! God and nature are avenged! When, hereafter, I shall experience an affectionate impulse, the expression of my features will betray my soul; and when I go near beauty and innocence, they will fly from me! What inexpressible tortures! What frightful punishment! Henceforth, I must find all my virtues in the remorse that consumes my life; I must purify myself in the unquenchable fires of never-dying sorrow; and ascend to the dignity of my being by means of profound and poignant regret for having sullied my soul. When I shall have earned rest by my sufferings, my youth will have gone. . . . But there is another life and, when I cross its threshold, I shall be re-clothed in the robe of immortal youth!"

Take notice, reader, that, before that unfortunate journey to Spain, Alphonse Rabbe was never spoken of otherwise than as the *Antinous of Aix*. An incurable melancholy took possession of him from this period.

"I have outlived myself!" he said, shaking his head sadly. Only his beautiful hair remained of his former self. Accursed be the invention of looking-glasses! By thirty, he had already stopped short of two attempts at suicide. But his hands were not steady enough and the dagger missed his heart. We have all seen that dagger to which Rabbe offered a kind of worship, as the last friend to whom he looked for the

supreme service. He has immortalised this dagger. Read this and tell me if ever a more virile style sprung from a human pen—

THE OLD DAGGER

"Thou camest out of the tomb of a warrior, whose fate is unknown to us; thou wast alone, and without companion of thy kind, hung on the walls of the wretched haunt of a dealer in pictures, when thy shape and appearance struck my attention. I felt the formidable temper of thy blade; I guessed the fierceness of thy point through the sheath of thick rust which covered thee completely. I hastened to bargain so as to have thee in my power; the low-born dealer, who only saw in thee a worthless bit of iron, will give thee up, almost for nothing, to my jealous eagerness. I will carry thee off secretly, pressed against my heart; an extraordinary emotion, mingled with joy, rage and confidence, shook my whole being. I feel the same shuddering every time I seize hold of thee. . . . Ancient dagger! We will never leave one another more!

"I have rid thee of that injurious rust, which, even after that long interval of time, has not altered thy form. Here, thou art restored to the glories of the light; thou flashest as thou comest forth from that deep darkness. I did not imprudently entrust thee to a mercenary workman to repair the injustice of those years: I myself, for two days, carefully worked to repolish thee; it is I who preserved thee from the injurious danger of being at the first moment confused with worthless old iron, from the disgrace, perhaps, of going to an obscure forge, to be transformed into a nail to shoe the mule of an iniquitous Jesuit.

"What is the reason that thy aspect quickens the flow of my blood, in spite of myself? . . . Shall I not succeed in understanding thy story? To what century dost thou belong? What is the name of the warrior whom thou followedst to his last resting-place? What is the terrible blow which bent thee slightly? . . .

"I have left thee that mark of thy good services: to efface that imperceptible curve which made thy edge uneven, thou wouldst have had to be submitted to the action of fire; but who knows but that thou mightst have lost thy virtue? Who, then, would have given me back the secret of that blade, strong and obedient to that which the breastplate did not

always withstand, when the blow was dealt with a valiant arm?

"Was it in the blood of a newly killed bull that thy point was buried on first coming out of the fire? Was it in the cold air of a narrow gorge of mountains? Was it in the syrup prepared from certain herbs or, perhaps, in holy oil? None of our best craftsmen, not Bromstein himself, could tell.

"Tell me whom thou hast comforted and whom punished? Hast thou avenged the outlaw for the judicial murder of his father? Hast thou, during the night, engraved on some granite columns the sentence of those who passed sentence? Thou canst only have obeyed powerful and just passions; the intrepid man who wanted to carry thee away with him to his last resting-place had baptized thee in the blood of a feudal oppressor.

"Thou art pure steel; thy shape is bold, but without studied grace; thou wast not, indeed, frivolously wrought to adorn the girdle of a foppish carpet-knight of the court of Francis I., or of Charles-Quint; thou art not of sufficient beauty to have been thus commonplace; the filigree-work which ornaments thy hilt is only of red copper, that brilliant shade of red which colours the summit of the Mont de la Victoire on long May evenings.

"What does this broad furrow mean which, a quarter of the length down thy blade to the hilt, is pierced with a score of tiny holes like so many loop-holes? Doubtless they were made so that the blood could drip through, which shoots and gushes along the blade in smoking bubbles when the blow has gone home. Oh! if I shed some evil blood I too should wish it to drain off and not to soil my hands. . . . If it were the blood of a powerful enemy to one's country, little would it matter if it was left all blood smeared; I should have settled my accounts with this wretched world beforehand, and then thou wouldst not fail me at need; thou wouldst do me the same service as thou renderest formerly to him whose bones the tomb received along with thee.

"In storms of public misfortunes, or in crises of personal adversity, the tomb is often the only refuge for noble hearts; it, at any rate, is impregnable and quiet: there one can brave accusers and the instruments of despotism, who are as vile as the accusers themselves!

"Open the gates of eternity to me, I implore thee! Since it

needs must be, we will go together, my old dagger, thou and I, as with a new friend. Do not fail me when my soul shall ask transit of thee; afford to my hand that virile self-reliance which a strong man has in himself; snatch me from the outrages of petty persecutors and from the slow torture of the unknown!"

Although this dagger was treasured by the unhappy Rabbe, as we have mentioned, it was not by its means that the *accursed one*, as he called himself, was to put an end to his miseries. Rabbe was only thirty and had strength enough in him yet to go on living.

So, in despair, he dragged out his posthumous existence and flung himself into the political arena, as a gladiator takes comfort to himself by showing himself off between two tigers.

1821 began; the death of the Duc de Berry served as an excuse for many reactionary laws; Alphonse Rabbe now found his golden hour; he came to Marseilles and started *Le Phocéen*, in a countryside that was a very volcano of Royalism. Would you hear how he addresses those in power? Then listen. Hear how he addressed men of influence—

"Oligarchies are fighting for the rays of liberty across the dead body of an unfortunate prince. . . . O Liberty! mark with thy powerful inspirations those hours of the night which William Tell and his friends used to spend in striking blows to redress wrongs! . . ."

When liberty is invoked in such terms she rarely answers to the call. One morning, someone knocked at Rabbe's door; he went to open it, and two policemen stood there who asked him to accompany them to the prison. When Rabbe was arrested, all Marseilles rose up in a violent Royalist explosion against him. An author who had written a couple of volumes of fables took upon himself to support the Bourbon cause in one of the papers. Rabbe read the article and replied—

"Monsieur, in one of your apologues you compare yourself to a sheep; well and good. Then, *monsieur le mouton*, go on, cropping your tender grass and stop biting other things!"

The writer of fables paid a polite call upon Rabbe; they shook hands and all was forgotten.

However, the *Phocéen* had been suspended the very day its chief editor was arrested. Rabbe was set free after a narrow escape of being assassinated by those terrible Marseillais Royalists who, during the early years of the Restoration, left behind them such wide traces of bloodshed. He went to Paris, where his two friends, Thiers and Mignet, had already won a high position in the hôtels of Laffite and of Talleyrand. If Rabbe had preserved the features of Apollo and the form of Antinous, he would have won all Parisian society by his charm of manner and his delightful winning mental attainments; but his mirror condemned him to seclusion more than ever. His sole, his only, friend was his pipe; Rabbe smoked incessantly. We have read the magnificent prose ode he addressed to his dagger; let us see how, in another style, he spoke to his pipe, or, rather, of his pipe.

MA PIPE

"Young man, light my pipe; light it and give it to me, so that I can chase away a little of the weariness of living, and give myself up to forgetfulness of everything, whilst this imbecile people, eager after gross emotions, hastens its steps towards the pompous ceremony of the Sacred-Heart in opulent and superstitious Marseilles.

"I myself hate the multitude and its stupid excitement; I hate these fairs either sacred or profane, these festivals with all their cheating games, at the cost of which an unlucky people consents readily to forget the ills which overwhelm it; I hate these signs of servile respect which the duped crowd lavishes on those who deceive and oppress it; I hate that worship of error which absolves crime, afflicts innocence and drives the fanatic to murder by its inhuman doctrines of exclusiveness!

"Let us forgive the dupes! All those who go to these festivals are promised pleasure. Unfortunate human beings! We pursue this alluring phantom along all kinds of roads. To be elsewhere than one is, to change place and affections, to leave the supportable for worse, to go after novelty upon novelty, to

obtain one more sensation, to grow old, burdened with unsatisfied desires, to die finally without having lived, such is our destiny!

"What do I myself look for at the bottom of thy little bowl, O my pipe! Like an alchemist, I am searching how to transmute the woes of the present into fleeting delights; I inhale thy smoke with hurried draughts in order to carry happy confusion to my brain, a quick delirium, that is preferable to cold reflection; I seek for sweet oblivion from what is, for the dream of what is not, and even for that which cannot be.

"Thou makest me pay dear for thy easy consolations; the brain is possibly consumed and weakened by the daily repetition of these disordered emotions. Thought becomes idle, and the imagination runs riot from the habit of depicting such wandering agreeable fictions.

"The pipe is the touch-stone of the nerves, the true dynamometer of slender tissues. Young people who conceal a delicate and feminine organisation beneath a man's clothing do not smoke, for they dread cruel convulsions, and, what would be still more cruel, the loss of the favours of Venus. Smoke, on the contrary, unhappy lovers, ardent and restless spirits tormented with the weight of your thoughts.

"The savants of Germany keep a pipe on their desks; it is through the waves of tobacco smoke that they search after truths of the intellectual and the spiritual order. That is why their works, always a little nebulous, exceed the reach of our French philosophers, whom fashion, and the salons, compel to inhale more urbane and gracious perfumes.

"When Karl Sand, the delegate of the Muses of Erlangen, came to Kotzebue's house, the old man, before joining him, had him presented with coffee and a pipe. This token of touching hospitality did not in the least disarm the dauntless young man: a tear moistened his eyelid; but he persisted. Why? He sacrificed himself for liberty!

"The unhappy man works during the day; and, at night, his bread earned, with arms folded, before his tumble-down doorway, with the smoke of his pipe he drives away the few remaining thoughts that the repose of his limbs may leave him.

"O my pipe! what good things I owe to thee! If an importunate person, a foolish talker, a despicable fanatic, comes and addresses me, I quickly draw a cigar from my case and begin to smoke, and, henceforth, if I am condemned to the affliction

of listening, I at least escape the penalty of replying to him. At intervals, a bitter smile compresses my lips, and the fool flatters himself that I approve him! He attributes to the effect of the rash cigar the equivocal heed I pay to his babble. . . . He redoubles his loquacity; but, stifled by his impertinence, I suddenly emit the clouds of thick smoke which I have collected in my mouth, like the scorn within my breast.

"I exhale both at once, burning vapour and repressed indignation. Oh! how nauseating is the idiocy of others to him who is already out of love with, and wearied of, his own burdens! . . . I smother him with smoke! If only I could asphyxiate the fool with the lava from my tiny volcano!

"But when a friend who is lovable alike in mind and heart comes to me, the pleasure of the pipe quickens the happiness of the meeting. After the first talk, which rapidly flows along, whilst the lighted punch scatters the spirituous particles which abound in the sparkling flame of the liqueur, the glasses clink together: Friend, from this day and for a year hence, let us drain the brotherly cup under the happiest auspices!

"Then we light two cigars, just alike; incited by my friend to talk on a thousand different topics, I often let mine go out, and he gives me a light again from his own. . . . I am like an old husband who relights a score of times from the lips of a young beauty the flame of his passion, as impotent as many times over. O my friend! when, then, will happier days shine forth?

"Tell me, my friend, in those parts from whence thou comest, are men filled with hope and courage? Do they keep constant and faithful to the worship of our great goddess, Liberty? . . . Tell me, if thou knowest, how long we must still chafe at the humiliating bit which condemns us to silence? . . .

"How it hinders me from flinging down my part of servitude! How it delays me from seeing the vain titles of tyranny, which oppress us, reduced to powder; from seeing the ashes of a dishonoured diadem scattered at the breath of patriots as the ashes of my pipe are scattered by mine! My soul is weary of waiting, friend; I warn thee, and with horror I meditate upon the doings of such sad waywardness. See how this people, roused wholly by the infamou sect of Loyola, rushes to fling itself before their strange processions! Young and old, men and women, all hasten to receive their hypocritical and futile benedictions! The fools! if the plague passed under a canopy

they would run to see it pass by and kneel before it! Tell me, friend, is such a people fit for liberty? Is it not rather condemned to grow old and still be kept in the infantine swaddling clothes of a two-fold bondage?

"Men are still but children. Nevertheless, the human race increases and goes on progressing continually, and meanwhile stretches its bonds till they break. The time draws near when it will no longer listen to the lame man who calls upon it to stop, when it will no longer ask its way of the blind. May the world become enlightened! God desires it! . . . And we, my friend, we will smoke whilst we watch for the coming dawn. Happily, friend, liberty has her secrets, her resources. This people, which seems to us for ever brutalised, is, however, educating itself and every day becomes more enlightened! Friend, we will forgive the slaves for running after distractions; we will bear with the immodest mother who prides herself that her daughters will pass for virgins when they have been blessed. We will not be surprised that old scoundrels hope to sweat out the seeds of their crimes, exhausting themselves to carry despicable images.

"O my pipe! every day do I owe thee that expressive emblem of humility which religion only places once a year on the brow of the adoring Christian: Man is but dust and ashes. . . . That, in fact, is all which remains at the last of the tenderest or most magnanimous heart, of hearts over-intoxicated with joy or pride, or those consumed with the bitterest pains.

"These small remnants of men, these ashes, the lightest zephyr scatter into the empty air. . . . Where, then, is the dust of Alexander, where the ashes of Gengis? They are nothing more than vain historic phantoms; those great subduers of nations, those terrible oppressors of men, what are they but fine-sounding names, objects of vain enthusiasm or of useless malediction!

"I, too, shall soon perish; all that makes up my being, my very name, will disappear like light smoke. . . . In a few days' time, perhaps at the very spot where I now write, it will not even be known that I have ever existed. . . . Now, does something imperishable breathe forth and rise up on high from this perishable body? Does there dwell in man one spark worthy to light the calumet of the angels upon the pavements of the heavens? . . . O my pipe! chase away, banish

this ambitious and baneful desire after the unknown and the impenetrable!"

We may be mistaken, but it seems to us that one would search in vain for anything more melancholy in *Werther* or more bitter in *Don Juan*, than the pages we have just read.

CHAPTER X

Rabbe's friends—*La Sœur grise*—The historical résumés—M. Brézé's advice—An imaginative man—Berruyer's style—Rabbe with his hairdresser, his concierge and confectioner—*La Sœur grise* stolen—*Le Centaure.*

ALPHONSE Rabbe's most assiduous disciples were Thiers and Mignet;[1] they came to see him most days and treated him with the respect of pupils towards their master. But Rabbe was independent to the verge of intractability; and always ready to rear even under the hand that caressed him. Now, Rabbe discerned that these two writers were already on the way to become historians, had no desire to make a third in a trio with them and resolved to be more true to life than the historians and to write a novel. Walter Scott was then all the rage in London and Paris.

Rabbe seized paper and pen and wrote the title of his novel on the first leaf, *La Sœur grise.* Then he stopped, and I dare go so far even as to say that this first page was never turned over. True, what Rabbe did in imagination was much more real to him than what he actually did.

Félix Bodin had just begun to inaugurate the era of *Résumés historiques*; the publishers, Lecointe and Roret, went about asking for summaries from anyone at all approaching an author; résumés showered in like hail; the very humblest scholar felt himself bound to send in his résumé.

[1] Do not let it be thought for one moment that it is in order to make out any intimacy whatsoever with the two famous historians, whom I have several times mentioned, that I say Thiers and Mignet; theirs are names which have won the privilege of being presented to the public without the banal title of *monsieur.*

There was a regular scourge of them; even the most harmless of persons were attacked with the disease. Rabbe eclipses all those obscure writers at a bound; he published, successively, résumés of the history of Spain, of Portugal and of Russia; all extending to several editions. These three volumes showed admirable talent for the writing of history, and their only defect was the commonplace title under which they were published.

"What are you working at?" Thiers often asked Alphonse Rabbe, as they saw the reams of paper he was using up.

"I am at work on my *Sœur grise*," he replied.

In the summer of 1824, Mignet made a journey to Marseilles where, before all his friends, he spread the praises of Rabbe's forthcoming novel, *La Sœur grise*, which Mignet believed to be nearly completed. Besides these fine books of history, Alphonse Rabbe wrote excellent articles in the *Courrier-Français* on the Fine Arts. On this subject, he was not only a great master but, in addition, a great critic. He was possibly slightly unfair to Vaudeville drama and a little severe on its exponents; he carried this injustice almost to the point of hatred. A droll adventure arose out of his dislike. A compatriot of Rabbe, a Marseillais named M. Brézé (you see we sometimes put *Monsieur*) was possessed by an ardent desire for giving Rabbe advice. (Let us here insert, parenthetically, the observation that the Marseillais are born advisers, specially when their advice is unsolicited.)

Well, M. Brézé had given endless advice to Rabbe while he was still at Marseilles, advice which we can easily guess he took good care not to follow. M. Brézé came to Paris and met Barthélemy, the poet, at the Palais-Royal. The two compatriots entered into conversation with one another—

"What is Rabbe doing?" asked M. Brézé.

"Résumés."

"Ah! so Rabbe is doing résumés?" repeated M. Brézé. "Hang it all!"

"Quite so."

"What are these résumés?"

"The quintessence of history compressed into small volumes instead of being spun out into large ones."

"How many such résumés does he do in the year?"

"Perhaps one and a half or two at the most."

"And how much does a résumé bring in?"

"I believe twelve hundred francs."

"So, if Rabbe works all the year and has only done one résumé and a half, he has earned eighteen hundred francs?"

"Eighteen hundred francs, yes! by Jove!"

"Hum!"

And M. Brézé began to reflect. Then, suddenly, he asked—

"Do you think Rabbe is as clever as M. Scribe?"

The question was so unlooked for and, above all, so inappropriate, that Barthélemy began to laugh.

"Why, yes," he said; "only it is cleverness of a different order."

"Oh! that does not matter!"

"Why does it not matter?"

"If he has as much talent as M. Scribe it is all that is necessary."

Again he fell into reflection; then, after a pause he said to Barthélemy—

"Is it true that M. Scribe earns a hundred thousand francs a year?"

"People say so," replied Barthélemy.

"Well, then," said M. Brézé, "in that case I must offer Rabbe some advice."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"You are quite capable of doing so—what will it be?"

"I must tell him to leave off writing his résumés and take to writing vaudevilles."

The advice struck Barthélemy as a magnificent joke.

"Say that again," he said to M. Brézé.

"I must advise Rabbe to leave off writing his résumés and take to writing vaudevilles."

"My goodness!" exclaimed Barthélemy, "do offer him that advice, Monsieur Brézé."

"I will."

"When?"

"The first time I see him."

"You promise me you will?"

"On my word of honour."

"Whatever you do don't forget!"

"Make your mind quite easy."

Barthélemy and M. Brézé shook hands and separated. M. Brézé very much delighted with himself for having conceived such a splendid idea; Barthélemy with only one regret, that he could not be at hand when he put his idea into execution.

As a matter of fact, M. Brézé met Rabbe one day, upon the Pont des Arts. Rabbe was then deep in Russian history: he was as pre-occupied as Tacitus.

"Oh! I am pleased to see you, my dear Rabbe!" said M. Brézé, as he came up to him.

"And I to see you," said Rabbe.

"I have been looking for you for the past week."

"Indeed."

"Upon my word, I have!"

"What for?"

"My dear Rabbe, you know how attached I am to you?"

"Why, yes!"

"Well, then, in your own interest . . . you understand? In your interest . . ."

"Certainly, I understand."

"Well, I have a piece of advice to offer you."

"To offer me?"

"Yes, you."

"Give it me, then," said Rabbe, looking at Brézé over his spectacles, as he was in the habit of doing, when he felt great surprise or people began to bore him.

"Believe me, I speak as a friend."

"I do not doubt it; but what is the advice?"

"Rabbe, my friend, instead of making résumés, write vaudevilles!"

A deep growl sounded from the historian's breast. He seized the offerer of advice by the arm, and in an awful voice he said to him—

"Monsieur, one of my enemies must have sent you to insult me."

"One of your enemies?"

"It was Latouche!"

"Why, no . . ."

"Then it was Santo-Domingo!"

"No."

"Or Loëve-Weymars!"

"I swear to you it was none of them."

"Tell me the name of the insulting fellow."

"Rabbe! my dear Rabbe!"

"Give me his name, monsieur, or I will take you by the heels and pitch you into the Seine, as Hercules threw Pirithous into the sea."

Then, perceiving that he had got mixed in his quotation—

"Pirithous or some other, it is all the same!"

"But I take my oath . . ."

"Then it is you yourself?" exclaimed Rabbe, before Brézé had time to finish his sentence. "Well, monsieur, you shall account to me for this insult!"

At this proposition, Brézé gave such a jump that he tore himself from the pincer-like grip that held him and ran to put himself under the protection of the pensioner who took the toll at the bridge.

Rabbe took himself off after first making a gesture significant of future vengeance. Next day he had forgotten all about it. Brézé, however, remembered it ten years afterwards!

Two explanations must follow this anecdote which ought really to have preceded it. From much study of the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Rabbe had imbibed something of the character of the susceptible Genevese; he thought there was a general conspiracy organised against him: that his Catiline and Manlius and Spartacus were Latouche, Santo-Domingo and Loëve-Weymars; he even

went so far as to suspect his two Pylades, Thiers and Mignet.

"They are my d'Alembert and Diderot!" he said.

It was quite evident he believed Brézé's suggestion was the result of a conspiracy that was just breaking out.

Rabbe's life was a species of perpetual hallucination, an existence made up of dreams; and sleep, itself, the only reality. One day, he button-holed Méry; his manner was gloomy, his hand on his breast convulsively crumpled his shirt-front.

"Well," he exclaimed, shaking his head up and down, "I told you so!"

"What?"

"That he was an enemy of mine."

"Who?"

"Mignet."

"But, my dear Rabbe, he is nothing of the kind. . . . Mignet loves and admires you."

"Ah! *he* love me!"

"Yes."

"*He* admire me!"

"No doubt of it."

"Well, do you know what the man who professes to love and admire me said of me?"

"What did he say?"

"Why, he said that I was a man of IMAGINATION, yes, he did."

Méry assumed an air of consternation to oblige Rabbe. Rabbe, to revenge himself for Mignet's insult, wrote in the preface of a second edition of his résumés these crushing words—

"The pen of the historian ought not to be like a leaden pipe through which a stream of tepid water flows on to the paper."

From this moment, his wrath against historians,—modern historians, that is, of course: he worshipped Tacitus,—knew no bounds; and, when there were friends present at his house and all historians were absent, he would declaim in thunderous tones—

"Would you believe it, gentlemen, there are in France, at the present moment and of our generation and rank, historians who take it into their heads to copy the style of the veterans, Berruyer, Catrou and Rouille? Yes, in each line of their modern battles they will tell you that thirty thousand men were *cut in pieces*, or that they *bit the dust*, or that they *were left lying strewn upon the scene.* How behind the times these youngsters are! The other day, one of them, in describing the battle of Austerlitz, wrote this sentence: 'Twenty-five thousand Russians were drawn up in battle upon a vast frozen lake; Napoleon gave orders that firing should be directed against this lake. Bullets broke through the ice and the twenty-five thousand Russians BIT THE DUST!'"

It is curious to note that such a sentence was actually written in one of the résumés of that date. The second remark that we ought to have made will explain the comparison that Rabbe had hazarded when he spoke of himself as Hercules and of Brézé as Pirithous. He had so effectually contracted the habit of using grand oratorical metaphor and stilted language, that he could never descend to a more familiar style of speech in his relations with more ordinary people. Thus, he once addressed his hairdresser solemnly in the following terms:—

"Do not disarrange the economy of my hair too much; let the strokes of your comb fall lightly on my head, and take care, as Boileau says, that 'L'ivoire trop hâté ne se brise en vos mains!'"

He said to his porter—

"If some friend comes and knocks at my hospitable portal, deal kindly with him. . . . I shall soon return: I go to breathe the evening air upon the Pont des Arts."

He said to his pastry-cook, Grandjean, who lived close by him in the rue des Petits-Augustins—

"Monsieur Grandjean, the vol-au-vent that you did me the honour to send yesterday had a crust of Roman cement, obstinate to the teeth; give a more unctuous turn to your culinary art and people will be grateful to you."

While all these things were happening, Rabbe fully imagined that he was writing his novel, *La Sœur grise*.

One day, Thiers came in to see him, as was his custom.

"Well, Rabbe," he said, "what are you at work upon now?"

"Parbleu!" replied Rabbe, "the same as usual, you know! My *Sœur grise*."

"It ought to be nearly finished by now."

"It is finished."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Do you doubt me?"

"No."

"But you do doubt it?"

"Of course not."

"Stay," he said, picking up an exercise-book full of sheets of paper, "here it is."

Thiers took it from him.

"But what is this? You have given me blank sheets of paper, my dear fellow!"

Rabbe sprang like a tiger upon Thiers, and might, perhaps, in 1825, have demolished the Minister of the First of March, had not Thiers opened the book and showed him the pages as white as the dress worn by M. Planard's shepherdess. Rabbe tore his hair with both hands.

"Do you know what has happened to me?" he shouted.

"No."

"Someone has stolen the MS. of my *Sœur grise*!"

"Oh! my God!" exclaimed Thiers, who did not want to vex him: "do you know who is the thief?"

"No . . . stay, yes, indeed, I think I do . . . it is Loëve-Weymars! He shall perish by my own hand; I will send him my two seconds!"

Loëve-Weymars was not in Paris. For upwards of a fortnight Rabbe laboured under the delusion that he had written *La Sœur grise* from cover to cover, and that Loëve-Weymars was jealous of him and had robbed him of his manuscript.

When such petulant insults fell upon friends like Loëve-Weymars, Thiers, Mignet, Armaud Carrel and Méry, it did not matter; but, when they were directed at strangers less acquainted with Rabbe's follies, affairs sometimes assumed a more tragic aspect. Thus, about this period, he had two duels; one with Alexis Dumesnil, the other with Coste; he received a sword-cut from both of these gentlemen; but these wounds did not cure him of his passion for quarrelling. He used to say that, in his youth, he had been very clever at handling the javelin; unluckily, however, his adversaries always declined that weapon, which refusal Rabbe, with his enthusiasm for antiquity, never could understand.

But if Rabbe admired antiquity madly, it was because he felt it strongly; his piece, *Le Centaure*, is André Chénier in prose. Let us give the proof of what we have been stating—

THE CENTAUR

"Swift as the west wind, amorous, superb, a young centaur comes to carry off the beauteous Cymothoë from her old husband. The impotent cries of the old man are heard afar. . . . Proud of his prey, impotent with desire, the ravisher stops beneath the deep shade of the banks of the river. His flanks still palpitate from the swiftness of his course; his breath comes hard and fast. He stops; his strong legs bend under him; he stretches one forth and kneels with agility on the other. He lovingly raises his beautiful prey whom he holds trembling across his powerful thighs; he takes her and presses her against his manly breast, sighs a thousand sighs and covers her tear-dewed eyelids with kisses.

"'Fear not,' he says to her, 'O Cymothoë! Be not terrified of a lover who offers to thy charms the united quality of both man and war-horse. Believe me! my heart is worth more than that of a vile mortal who dwells in your towns. Tame my wild independence; I will bear thee to the freshest rivers, beneath the loveliest of shade; I will carry thee over the green prairies, which are bathed by the Pene or patriarchal Achelous. Seated on my broad back, with thy arms intertwined in the rings of my black hair, thou canst entrust thy charms to the gambols of the waves, without fear that a jealous

god will venture to seize thee to take thee to the depths of his crystal grotto. . . . I love thee, O young Cymothoë! Drive away thy tears; thou canst try thy power: thou hast me in subjection!'

"'Splendid monster!' replies the weeping Cymothoë, 'I am struck with amazement. Thy accents are full of gentleness, and thou speakest words of love! Why, thou talkest like a man! Thy fearful caresses do not slay me! Tell me why! But dost thou not hear the cries of Dryas, my old husband? Centaur, fear for thy life! His kisses are like ice, but his vengeance is cruel; his hounds are flying in thy tracks; his slaves follow them; haste thee to fly and leave me!'

"'I leave thee!' replies the Centaur. And he stifles a plaintive murmur on the lips of his captive. 'I leave thee! Where is the Pirithous, the Alcides who dare come to dispute my conquest with me? Have I not my javelins? Have I not my heavy club? Have I not my swift speed? Has not Neptune given to the Centaur the impetuous strength of the storm?'

"Then suddenly he bounded away full of courage, confidence and happiness. Cymothoë balanced as if she was hung in a moving net under these green vaults, or like as though borne in a chariot of clouds by Zephyrus, henceforth rids herself of her useless terrors and abandons herself to the raptures of this strange lover.

"Again he stops and she admires the way nature has delighted to mate in him the lovely form of a horse with the majestic features of a man. Intelligent thought animates his glance, so proud and yet so gentle; beneath that broad breast dwells a heart touched by her charms. . . . What a splendid slave to Cymothoë and to love!

"She soon stops looking; a burning blush covers her cheeks and her eyelids droop; then, as her lover redoubles his caresses, and unfastens her girdle—

"'Stay!' she says to him, 'stay, beauteous Centaur! Dost thou not hear the fiery pack of hounds? Do not the arrows whistle in thy ears. . . . I do not indeed hate thee; but leave me! Leave me!'

"But neither Dryas nor his hounds nor slaves come that way, and those were not the reason of Cymothoë's fears. He, smiling—

"'Calm thy fright; come, let us cross the river, and do not

dread the sacrifice we are about to offer to the powerful Venus on the other side! . . . Soon, alas! the forests will see no more such nuptials. Our fathers have succumbed, betrayed by the wedding of Thetis and Peleus; we are now few in number, solitary, fugitive, not from man, weaker and less noble than we, but before Death who pursues us. The laws of a mysterious nature have thus decreed it; the reign of our race is nearly over!

"'This globe, deprived of the love of the gods who made it, must grow old and the weak replace the strong; debased mortals will have nothing but vain memories of the early joys of the world. Thou art perhaps the last daughter of men destined to be allied with our race; but thou wilt at least have been the most beautiful and the happiest! Come!'

"Thus speaks the man-horse, and replacing his delightsome burden on his bare back, he runs to the river and rushes into the midst of the waves, which sparkle round him in diamond sheaves burning with the setting fire of a summer sun. His eyes fixed on those of the beauty which intoxicates him, he swims across the stream and is lost to sight in the green depths which stretch from the other side to the foot of the high mountains. . . ."

Is this not a genuine bit of antiquity without a modern touch in it, like a bas-relief taken from the temple of Hercules at Thebes or of Theseus at Athens?

CHAPTER XI

Adèle—Her devotion to Rabbe—Strong meat—*Appel à Dieu—L'âme et la comédie humaine—La mort—Ultime lettere*—Suicide—*À Alphonse Rabbe*, by Victor Hugo

WE have been forgetful, more than forgetful, even ungrateful, in saying that Rabbe's one and only consolation was his pipe; there was another.

A young girl, named Adèle, spent three years with him; but those three happy years only added fresh sorrows to Rabbe, for, soon, the beautiful fresh girl drooped like a flower at whose roots a worm is gnawing; she bowed her head, suffered for a year, then died.

History has made much stir about certain devoted attachments; no devotion could have been purer or more disinterested than the unnoticed devotion of this young girl, all the more complete that she crowned it with her death.

A subject of this nature is either stated in three brief lines of bald fact, or is extended over a couple of volumes as a psychological study. Poor Adèle! We have but four lines, and the memory of your devotion to offer you! Her death drove Rabbe to despair; from that time dates the most abandoned period of his life. Rabbe found out not only that the seeds of destruction were in him, but that they emanated from him. His wails of despair from that moment became bitter and frequent; and his thoughts turned incessantly towards suicide so that they might become accustomed to the idea. Certain memoranda hung always in his sight; he called them his *pain des forts*; they were, indeed, the spiritual bread he fed himself on.

We will give a few examples of his most remarkable thoughts from this lugubrious diary:—

"The whole life of man is but one journey towards death."

*

"Man, from whence comes thy pride? It was a mistake for thee to have been conceived; thy birth is a misfortune; thy life a labour; thy death inevitable."

*

"Thou living corpse! When wilt thou return to the dust? O solitude! O death! I have drunk deep of thy austere delights. You are my loves! the only ones that are faithful to me!"

*

"Every hour that passes by drives us towards the tomb and is hastened by the advance of those that precede it."

*

"Bitter and cruel is the absence of God's face from me. How much longer wilt Thou make me suffer?"

*

"Reflect in the morning that by night you may be no longer here; and at night, that by morning you may have died."

*

"Sometimes there is a melancholy remembrance of the glorious days of youth, of that happiness which never seems so great or so bitter as when remembered in the days of misfortune; at times, such collections confront the unfortunate wretch whose aspirations are towards death. Then, his despair turns to melancholy—almost even to hope."

*

"But these illusions of the beautiful days of youth pass and vanish away! Oh! what bitterness fills my soul! Inexorable nature, fate, destiny of providence give me back the cup of life and of happiness! My lips had scarcely touched it before you snatched it out of my trembling hands. Give me back the cup! Give it back! I am consumed by burning thirst; I have deceived myself; you have deceived me; I have never drunk, I have never satisfied my thirst, for the liquid evaporated like blue flame, which leaves behind it nothing but the smell of sulphur and volcanoes."

*

"Lightning from heaven! Why dost thou not rather strike the lofty tops of those oaks and fir trees whose robust old age

has already braved a hundred winters? They, at least, have lived; and have satiated themselves with the sweets of the earth!"

*

"I have been struck down in my prime; for nine years I have been a prey, fighting against death. . . . Miserable wretch why has not the hand of God which smote me annihilated me altogether?"

Then, in consequence of his pains, the soul of the unhappy Rabbe rises to the level of prayer; he, the sceptic, loses faith in unbelief and returns to God—

"O my God!" he exclaims in the solitudes of night, which carries the plaint of his groans and tears to the ears of his neighbours. "O my God! If Thou art just, Thou must have a better world in store for us! O my God! Thou who knowest all the thoughts that I bare here before Thee and the remorse to which my scalding tears give expression; O my God! if the groanings of an unfortunate soul are heard by Thee, Thou must understand, O my God! the heart that Thou didst give me, thou knowest the wishes it formed, and the insatiable desires that still possess it. Oh! if afflictions have broken it, if the absence of all consolation and tenderness, if the most horrible solitude, have withered it, O my God! help Thy wretched creature; give me faith in a better world to come! Oh! may I find beyond the grave what my soul, unrecognised and bewildered, has unceasingly craved for on this earth. . . ."

Then God took pity on him. He did not restore his health or hope, his youth, beauty and loves in this life; those three illusions vanished all too soon: but God granted him the gift of tears. And he thanked God for it. Towards the close of the year 1829, the disease made such progress that Rabbe resolved he would not live to see the opening of the year 1830. Thus, as he had addressed God, as he had addressed his soul, so he now addresses death—

DEATH

"Thou diest! Thou hast reached the limit to which all things comes at last; the end of thy miseries, the beginning of

thy happiness. Behold, death stands face to face with thee! Thou wilt not longer be able to wish for, nor to dread it. Pains and weakness of body, sad heart-searchings, piercing spiritual anguish, devouring griefs, all are over! Thou wilt never suffer them again; thou goest in peace to brave the insolent pride of the successful evil-doer, the despising of fools and the abortive pity of those who dare to style themselves *good*.

"The deprivation of many evils will not be an evil in itself; I have seen thee chafing at thy bit, shaking the humiliating chains of an adverse fate in despair; I have often heard the distressing complaints which issued from the depths of thy oppressed heart. . . . Thou art satisfied at last. Haste thee to empty the cup of an unfortunate life, and perish the vase from which thou wast compelled to drink such bitter draughts.

"But thou dost stop and tremble! Thou dost curse the duration of thy suffering and yet dost dread and regret that the end has come! Thou apprisest without reason or justice, and dost lament equally both what things are and what they cease to be. Listen, and think for one moment.

"In dying, thou dost but follow the path thy forefathers have trodden; thousands of generations before thee have fallen into the abyss into which thou hast to descend; many thousands will fall into it after thee. The cruel vicissitude of life and death cannot be altered for thee alone. Onward then towards thy journey's end, follow where others have gone, and be not afraid of straying from it or losing thyself when thou hast so many other travelling companions. Let there be no signs of weakness, no tears! The man who weeps over his own death is the vilest and most despicable of all beings. Submit unmurmuringly to the inevitable; thou must die, as thou hast had to live, without will of thy own. Give back, therefore, without anxiety, thy life which thou receivest unconsciously. Neither birth nor death are in thy power. Rather rejoice, for thou art at the beginning of an immortal dawn. Those who surround thy deathbed, all those whom thou hast ever seen, of whom thou hast heard speak or read, the small number of those thou hast known especially well, the vast multitude of those who have lived formerly or been born or are to be born in ages to come throughout the world, all these have gone or will go the road thou art going. Look with wise eyes upon the long

caravan of successive generations which have crossed the deserts of life, fighting as they travel across the burning sands for one drop of the water which inflames their thirst more than it appeases it! Thou art swallowed up in the crowd directly thou fallest: but look how many others are falling too at the same time with thee!

"Wouldst thou desire to live for ever? Wouldst thou only wish thy life to last for a thousand years? Remember the long hours of weariness in thy short career, thy frequent fainting under the burden. Thou wast aghast at the limited horizon of a short, uncertain and fugitive life: what wouldst thou have said if thou hadst seen an immeasurable, inevitably long future of weariness and sorrow stretch before thy eyes!

"O mortals! you weep over death, as though life were something great and precious! And yet the vilest insects that crawl share this rare treasure of life with you! All march towards death because all yearn towards rest and perfect peace.

"Behold! the approach of the day that thou fain wouldst have tried to bring nearer by thy prayers, if a jealous fate had not deferred it; for which thou didst often sigh; behold the moment which is to remove the capricious yoke of fortune from the trammels of human society, from the venomous attacks of thy fellow-creatures. Thou thinkest thou wilt cease to exist and that thought torments thee. . . . Well, but what proves to thee that thou wilt be annihilated? All the ages have retained a hope in immortality. The belief in a spiritual life was not merely a dogma of a few religious creeds; it was the need and the cry of all nations that have covered the face of the earth. The European, in the luxuries of his capital towns, the aboriginal American-Indian under his rude huts, both equally dream of an immortal state; all cry to the tribunal of nature against the incompleteness of this life.

"If thou sufferest, it is well to die; if thou art happy or thinkest thou art so, thou wilt gain by death since thy illusion would not have lasted long. Thou passest from a terrestrial habitation to a pure and celestial one. Why look back when thy foot is upon the threshold of its portals? The eternal distributor of good and evil, our Sovereign Master, calls thee to Himself; it is by His desire thy prison flies open; thy heavy chains are broken and thy exile is ended; therefore rejoice! Thou wilt soar to the throne of thy King and Saviour!

"Ah! if thou art not shackled with the weight of some unexpiated crime, thou wilt sing as thou diest; and, like the Roman emperor, thou wilt rise up in thy agony at the very thought, and thou wouldst die standing with eyes turned towards the promised land!

"O Saint Preux and Werther! O Jacob Ortis! how far were you from reaching such heights as that! Orators even to the death agony, your brains alone it is which lament; man in his death throes, this actually dying creature, it is his heart that groans, his flesh that cries out, his spirit which doubts. Oh! how well one feels that all that hollow philosophising does not reassure him as to the pain of the supreme moment, and especially against that terror of annihilation, which brought drops of sweat to the brow of Hamlet!

"One more cry—the last, then silence shall fall on him who suffered much."

Moreover, Alphonse Rabbe wished there to be no doubt of how he died; hear this, his will, which he signed; there was to his mind no dishonour in digging himself a grave with his own hands between those of Cato of Utica and of Brutus—

"31 *December* 1829

"Like Ugo Foscolo, I must write my *ultime lettere*. If every man who had thought and felt deeply could die before the decline of his faculties from age, and leave behind him his *philosophical testament*, that is to say, a profession of faith bold and sincere, written upon the planks of his coffin, there would be more truths recognised and saved from the regions of foolishness and the contemptible opinion of the vulgar.

"I have other motives for executing this project. There are in the world various interesting men who have been my friends; I wish them to know how I ended my life. I desire that even the indifferent, namely, the bulk of the general public (to whom I shall be a subject of conversation for about ten minutes—perhaps even that is an exaggerated supposition), should know, however poor an opinion I have of the majority of people, that I did not yield to cowardice, but that the cup of my weariness was already filled, when fresh wrongs came and overthrew it. I wish, in conclusion, that my friends, those indifferent to me, and even my enemies, should know that I have but exercised quietly and with dignity the privilege that

every man acquires from nature—the right to dispose of himself as he likes. This is the last thing that has interest for me this side the grave. All my hopes lie beyond it . . . if perchance there be anything beyond."

Thus, poor Rabbe, after all thy philosophy, sifted as fine as ripe grain; after all thy philosophising; after many prayers to God and dialogues with thy soul, and many conversations with death, these supreme interlocutors have taught thee nothing and thy last thought is a doubt!

Rabbe had said he would not see the year 1830: and he died during the night of the 31 December 1829.

Now, how did he die? That gloomy mystery was kept locked in the hearts of the last friends who were present with him. But one of his friends told me that, the evening before his death, his sufferings were so unendurable, that the doctor ordered an opium plaster to be put on the sick man's chest. Next day, they hunted in vain for the opium plaster but could not find it. . . .

On 17 September 1835, Victor Hugo addresses these lines to him:—

À ALPHONSE RABBE

Mort le 31 *décembre* 1829

"Hélas! que fais tu donc, ô Rabbe, ô mon ami,
Sévère historien dans la tombe endormi?

Je l'ai pensé souvent dans les heures funèbres,
Seul, près de mon flambeau qui rayait les ténèbres,
O noble ami! pareil aux hommes d'autrefois,
Il manque parmi nous ta voix; ta forte voix,
Pleine de l'équité qui gonflait ta poitrine.

Il nous manque ta main, qui grave et qui burine,
Dans ce siècle où par l'or les sages sont distraits,
Où l'idée est servante auprès des intérêts;
Temps de fruits avortés et de tiges rompues,
D'instincts dénaturés, de raisons corrompues,
Où, dans l'esprit humain tout étant dispersé,
Le présent au hasard flotte sur le passé!

Si, parmi nous, ta tête était debout encore,
Cette cime où vibrait l'éloquence sonore,
Au milieu de nos flots tu serais calme et grand ;
Tu serais comme un pont posé sur le courant.
Tu serais pour chacun la boix haute et sensée
Qui fait que, brouillard s'en va de la pensée,
Et que la vérité, qu'en vain nous repoussions,
Sort de l'amas confus des sombres visions !

Tu dirais aux partis qu'ils font trop be poussière
Autour de la raison pour qu'on la voie entière ;
Au peuple, que la loi du travail est sur tous,
Et qu'il est assez fort pour n'être pas jaloux ;
Au pouvoir, que jamais le pouvoir ne se venge,
Et que, pour le penseur, c'est un spectacle étrange.
Et triste, quand la loi, figure au bras d'airain,
Deésse qui ne doit avoir qu'un front serein,
Sort, à de certains jours, de l'urne consulaire,
L'œil hagard, écumante et folle de colère !

Et ces jeunes esprits, à qui tu souriais,
Et que leur âge livre aux rêves inquiets,
Tu leur dirais : Amis nés pour des temps prospères,
Oh ! n'allez pas errer comme ont erré vos pères !
Laissez murir vos fronts ! gardez-vous, jeunes gens,
Des systèmes dorés aux plumages changeants,
Qui, dans les carrefours, s'en vont faire la roue !
Et de ce qu'en vos cœurs l'Amérique secoue,
Peuple à peine essayé, nation de hasard,
Sans tige, sans passé, sans histoire et sans art !
Et de cette sagesse impie, envenimée,
Du cerveau de Voltaire éclose tout armée,
Fille de l'ignorance et de l'orgueil, posant
Les lois des anciens jours sur les mœurs d' à présent ;
Qui refait un chaos partout où fut un monde ;
Qui rudement enfoncé,—ô démence profonde !
Le casque étroit de Sparte au front du vieux Paris ;
Qui, dans les temps passés, mal lus et mal compris,
Viole effrontément tout sage, pour lui faire
Un monstre qui serait la terreur de son père !
Si bien que les héros antiques tout tremblants
S'en sont voilé la face, et qu' après deux mille ans,
Par ses embrassements réveillé sous la pierre,
Lycurgue, qu'elle épouse, enfante Robespierre !"

Tu nons dirais à tous : 'Ne vous endormez pas !
Veillez et soyez prêts ! Car déjà, pas à pas,
La main de l'oiseleur dans l'ombre s'est glissée
Partout où chante un nid couvé par la pensée !
Car les plus nobles fronts sont vaincus ou sont las !
Car la Pologne, aux fers, ne peut plus même, hélas !
Mordre le pied tartare appuyé sur sa gorge !
Car on voit, chaque jour, s'allonger dans la forge
La chaîne que les rois, craignant la liberté,
Font pour cette geánte, endormie à côté !
Ne vous endormez pas ! travaillez sans relâche !
Car les grands ont leur œuvre et les petits leur tâche ;
Chacun a son ouvrage à faire, chacun met
Sa pierre à l'édifice encor loin du sommet—
Qui croit avoir fini, pour un roi qu'on dépose,
Se trompe : un roi qui tombe est toujours peu de chose ;
Il est plus difficile et c'est un plus grand poids
De relever les mœurs que d'abattre les rois.
Rien chez vous n'est complet : la ruine ou l'ébauche !
L'épi n'est pas formé que votre main le fauche !
Vous êtes encombrés de plans toujours rêvés
Et jamais accomplis . . . Hommes, vous ne savez,
Tant vous connaissez peu ce qui convient aux âmes,
Que faire des enfants, ni que faire des femmes !
Où donc en etes-vous ? Vous vous applaudissez
Pour quelques blocs de lois au hasard entassés !
Ah ! l'heure du repos pour aucun n'est venue ;
Travaillez ! vous cherchez une chose inconnue ;
Vous n'avez pas de foi, vous n'avez pas d'amour ;
Rien chez vous n'est encore éclairé du vrai jour !
Crépuscule et brouillards que vos plus clairs systèmes
Dans vos lois, dans vos mœurs et dans vos esprits mêmes,
Partout l'aube blanchâtre ou le couchant vermeil !
Nulle part le midi ! nulle part le soleil !'

Tu parlerais ainsi dans des livres austères,
Comme parlaient jadis les anciens solitaires,
Comme parlent tous ceux devant qui l'on se tait,
Et l'on t'écouterait comme on les écoutait ;
Et l'on viendrait vers toi, dans ce siècle plein d'ombre,
Où, chacun se heurtant aux obstacles sans nombre
Que, faute de lumière, on tâte avec la main,
Le conseil manque à l'âme, et le guide au chemin !

Hélas ! à chaque instant, des souffles de tempêtes
Amassent plus de brume et d'ombre sur nos têtes ;
De moment en moment l'avenir s'assombrit.
Dans le calme du cœur, dans la paix de l'esprit,
Je l'adressais ces vers, où mon âme sereine
N'a laissé sur ta pierre écumer nulle haine,
A toi qui dors couché dans le tombeau profond,
A toi qui ne sais plus ce que les hommes font !
Je l'adressais ces vers, pleins de tristes présages ;
Car c'est bien follement que nous nous croyons sages.
Le combat furieux recommence à gronder
Entre le droit de croître et le droit d'émonder ;
La bataille où les lois attaquent les idées
Se mêle de nouveau sur des mers mal sondées ;
Chacun se sent troublé comme l'eau sous le vent . . .
Et moi-même, à cette heure, à mon foyer rêvant,
Voilà, depuis cinq ans qu'on oubliait Procuste,
Que j'entends aboyer, au seuil du drame auguste,
La censure à l'haleine immonde, aux ongles noirs,
Cette chienne au front bas qui suit tous les pouvoirs,
Vile et mâchant toujours dans sa gueule souillée,
O muse ! quelque pan de ta robe étoilée !
Hélas ! que fais-tu donc, ô Rabbe, ô mon ami !
Sévère historien dans la tombe endormi ?"

If anything of poor Rabbe still survives, he will surely tremble with joy in his tomb at this tribute. Indeed, few kings have had such an epitaph !

CHAPTER XII

Chéron—His last compliments to Harel—Obituary of 1830—My official visit on New Year's Day—A striking costume—Read the *Moniteur*—Disbanding of the Artillery of the National Guard—First representation of *Napoleon Bonaparte*—Delaistre—Frédérick Lemaître

MEANTIME, throughout the course of that glorious year of 1830, death had been gathering in a harvest of celebrated men.

It had begun with Chéron, the author of *Tartufe de Mœurs*. We learnt his death in a singular fashion. Harel thought of taking up the only comedy that the good fellow had written, and had begun its rehearsals the same time as *Christine*. They rehearsed Chéron's comedy at ten in the morning and *Christine* at noon. One morning, Chéron, who was punctuality itself, was late. Harel had waited a little while, then given orders to prepare the stage for *Christine*. Steinberg had not got further than his tenth line, when a little fellow of twelve years came from behind one of the wings and asked for M. Harel.

"Here I am," said Harel, "what is it?"

"M. Chéron presents his compliments to you," said the little man, "and sends word that he cannot come to his rehearsal this morning."

"Why not, my boy?" asked Harel.

"Because he died last night," replied the little fellow.

"Ah! diable!" exclaimed Harel; "in that case you must take back my best compliments and tell him that I will attend his funeral to-morrow."

That was the funeral oration the ex-government inspector to the Théâtre-Français pronounced over him.

I believe I have mentioned somewhere that Taylor succeeded Chéron.

At the beginning of the year, on 15 February, Comte Marie de Chamans de Lavalette had also died; he it was who, in 1815, was saved by the devotion of his wife and of two Englishmen; one of whom, Sir Robert Wilson, I met in 1846 when he was Governor of Gibraltar. Comte de Lavalette lived fifteen years after his condemnation to death; caring for his wife, in his turn, for she had gone insane from the terrible anxiety she suffered in helping her husband to escape.

On 11 March the obituary list was marked by the death of the Marquis de Lally-Tollendal, whom I knew well: he was the son of the Lally-Tollendall who was executed in the place de Grêve as guilty of peculàtion, upon whom it will be recollected Gilbert wrote lines that were certainly some of his best. The poor Marquis de Lally-Tollendal was always in trouble, but this did not prevent him from becoming enormously stout. He weighed nearly three hundred pounds; Madame de Staël called him "the fattest of sentient beings."

Perhaps I have already said this somewhere. If so, I ask pardon for repeating it.

The same month Radet died, the doyen of vaudevillists. During the latter years of his life he was afflicted with kleptomania, but his friends never minded; if, after his departure they missed anything they knew where to go and look for the missing article.

Then, on 15 April, Hippolyte Bendo died. He was behindhand, for death, who was out of breath with running after him, caught him up at the age of one hundred and twenty-two. He had married again at one hundred and one!

Then, on 23 April, died the Chevalier Sue, father of Eugène Sue; he had been honorary physician in chief to the household of King Charles X. He was a man of great originality of mind and, at times, of singular artlessness of expression; those who heard him give his course of lectures on conchology will bear me out in this I am very sure.

On 29 May that excellent man Jérôme Gohier passed away, of whom I have spoken as an old friend of mine; and who could not forgive Bonaparte for causing the events of 18 Brumaire, whilst he, Gohier, was breakfasting with Josephine.

On 29 June died good old M. Pieyre, former tutor and secretary to the duc d'Orléans; author of *l'École des pères*; and the same who, with old Bichet and M. de Parseval de Grandmaison, had shown such great friendship to me and supported me to the utmost at the beginning of my dramatic career.

Then, on 29 July, a lady named Rosaria Pangallo died; she was born on 3 August 1698, only four years after Voltaire, whom we thought belonged to a past age, as he had died in 1778! The good lady was 132, ten years older than her compatriot Hippolyte Bendo, of whom we spoke just now.

On 28 August Martainville died, hero of the Pont du Pecq, whom we saw fighting with M. Arnault over *Germanicus*.

On 18 October Adam Weishaupt died, that famous leader of the Illuminati whose ashes I was to revive eighteen years later in my romance *Joseph Balsamo*.

Then, on 30 November, Pius VIII. passed to his account; he was succeeded by Gregory XVI., of whom I shall have much to say.

On 17 December Marmontel's son died in New York, America, in hospital, just as a real poet might have done.

Then, on the 31st of the same month, the Comtesse de Genlis died, that bogie of my childhood, whose appearances at the Château de Villers-Hellon I related earlier in these Memoirs, and who, before she died, had the sorrow of seeing the accession to the throne of her pupil, badly treated by her, as a politician, in a letter which we printed in our *Histoire de Louis-Philippe*.

Finally, on the last night of the old year, the artillery came to its end, killed by royal decree; and, as I had not heard of this decree soon enough, it led me to make the absurd blunder I am about to describe, which was probably among all the grievances King Louis-Philippe believed he had against me

the one that made him cherish the bitterest rancour towards me. The reader will recollect the resignation of one of our captains and my election to the rank thus left vacant; he will further remember that, owing to the enthusiasm which fired me at that period, I undertook the command of a manœuvre the day but one after my appointment. This made the third change I had had to make in my uniform in five months: first, mounted National Guard; then, from that, to a gunner in the artillery; then, from a private to a captain in the same arm of the service. In due course New Year's day was approaching, and there had been a meeting to decide whether we should pay a visit of etiquette to the king or not. In order to avoid being placed upon the index for no good reason, it was decided to go. Consequently, a rendezvous was made for the next day, 1 January 1831, at nine in the morning, in the courtyard of the Palais-Royal. Whereupon we separated. I do not remember what caused me to lie in bed longer than usual that New Year's morning 1831; but, to cut a long story short, when I looked at my watch, I saw that I had only just time, if that, to dress and reach the Palais-Royal. I summoned Joseph and, with his help, as nine o'clock was striking, I flew down stairs four steps at a time from my third storey. I need hardly say that, being in such a tremendous hurry, of course there was no cab or carriage of any description to be had. Thus, I reached the courtyard of the Palais-Royal by a quarter past nine. It was crowded with officers waiting their turn to present their collective New Year's congratulations to the King of the French; but, in the midst of all the various uniforms, that of the artillery was conspicuous by its absence. I glanced at the clock, and seeing that I was a quarter of an hour late, I thought the artillery had already taken up its position and that I should be able to join it either on the staircases or in one of the apartments. I rushed quickly up the State stairway and reached the great audience chamber. Not a sign of any artillerymen! I thought that, like Victor Hugo's kettle-drummers, the artillerymen must have passed and I decided to go in alone.

Had I not been so preoccupied with my unpunctuality, I should have remarked the strange looks people cast at me all round; but I saw nothing, thanks to my absent-mindedness, except that the group of officers, with whom I intermingled to enter the king's chamber, made a movement from centre to circumference, which left me as completely isolated as though I was suspected of bringing infection of cholera, which was beginning to be talked about in Paris. I attributed this act of repulsion to the part the artillery had played during the recent disturbances, and as I, for my part, was quite ready to answer for the responsibility of my own actions, I went in with my head held high. I should say, that out of the score of officers who formed the group I had honoured with my presence, I seemed to be the only one who attracted the attention of the king; he even gazed at me with such surprise that I looked around to find the cause of this incomprehensible stare. Among those present some put on a scornful smile, others seemed alarmed; and the expression of others, again, seemed to say: "Seigneur; pardon us for having come in with that man!" The whole thing was inexplicable to me. I went up to the king, who was so good as to speak to me.

"Ah! good day, Dumas!" he said to me; "that's just like you! I recognise you well enough! It is just like you to come!"

I looked at the king and, for the life of me, I could not tell what he was alluding to. Then, as he began laughing, and all the good courtiers round imitated his example, I smiled in company with everybody else, and went on my way. In the next room where my steps led me I found Vatout, Oudard, Appert, Tallencourt, Casimir Delavigne and a host of my old comrades. They had seen me through the half-open door and they, too, were all laughing. This universal hilarity began to confuse me.

"Ah!" said Vatout. "Well, you have a nerve, my friend!"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you have just paid the king a New Year's visit in a dress of *dissous*."

By *dissous* understand *dix sous* (ten sous).

Vatout was an inveterate punster.

"I do not understand you," I said, very seriously.

"Come now," he said. "You aren't surely going to try to make us believe that you did not know the king's order!"

"What order?"

"The disbandment of the artillery, of course!"

"What! the artillery is disbanded?"

"Why, it is in black and white in the *Moniteur*!"

"You are joking. Do I ever read the *Moniteur*?"

"You are right to say that."

"But, by Jove! I say it because it is true!"

They all began laughing again.

I will acknowledge that, by this time, I was dreadfully angry; I had done a thing that, if considered in the light of an act of bravado, might indeed be regarded as a very grave impertinence, and one in which I, least of any person, had no right to indulge towards the king. I went down the staircase as quickly as I had gone up it, ran to the café *du Roi*, and asked for the *Moniteur* with a ferocity that astonished the frequenters of the café. They had to send out and borrow one from the café *Minerve*. The order was in a prominent position; it was short, but explicit, and in these simple words—

"Louis-Philippe, King of the French,—To all, now and hereafter, Greeting. Upon the report of our Minister, the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, we have ordained and do ordain as follows:—

"Article 1.—The corps of artillery of the National Guard of Paris is disbanded.

"Article 2.—Proceedings for the reorganisation of that corps shall begin immediately.

"Article 3.—A commission shall be appointed to proceed with that reorganisation."

After seeing this official document I could have no further doubts upon the subject. I went home, stripped myself of my seditious clothing, put on the dress of ordinary folk, and went off to the Odéon for my rehearsal of *Napoléon Bonaparte*,

which was announced for its first production the next day. As I came away after the rehearsal, I met three or four of my artillery comrades, who congratulated me warmly. My adventure had already spread all over Paris; some thought it a joke in the worst possible taste, others thought my action heroic. But none of them would believe the truth that it was done through ignorance. To this act of mine I owed being made later a member of the committee to consider the national pensions lists, of the Polish committee and of that for deciding the distribution of honours to those who took conspicuous part in the July Revolution, and of being re-elected as lieutenant in the new artillery,—honours which naturally led to my taking part in the actions of 5 June 1832, and being obliged to spend three months' absence in Switzerland and two in Italy.

But, in the meantime, as I have said, *Napoléon* was to be acted on the following day, a literary event that was little calculated to restore me to the king's political good books. This time, the poor duc d'Orléans did *not* come and ask me to intercede with his father to be allowed to go to the Odéon. *Napoléon* was a success, but only from pure chance: its literary value was pretty nearly nil. The rôle of the spy was the only real original creation; all the rest was done with paste and scissors. There was some hissing amongst the applause, and (a rare thing with an author) I was almost of the opinion of those who hissed. But the expenses, with Frédérick playing the principal part, and Lockroy and Stockleit the secondary ones; with costumes and decorations and the burning of the Kremlin, and the retreat of Bérésina, and especially the passion of five years at Saint Helena, amounting to a hundred thousand francs; how could it, with all this, have been anything but a success? Delaistre acted the part of Hudson Lowe. I remember they were obliged to send the theatre attendants back with him each night to keep him from being stoned on his way home. The honours of the first night belonged by right to Frédérick far more than to me. Frédérick had just begun to make his fine and great reputation, a reputa-

tion conscientiously earned and well deserved. He had made his first appearances at the Cirque; then, as we have stated, he came to act at the Odéon, in the part of one of the brothers in *Les Macchabées*, by M. Guiraud; he next returned to the Ambigu, where he created the parts of Cartouche and of Cardillac, and, subsequently, he went to the Porte-Saint-Martin, where his name had become famous by his Méphistophélès, Marat and Le Joueur. He was a privileged actor, after the style of Kean, full of defects, but as full, also, of fine qualities; he was a genius in parts requiring violence, strength, anger, sarcasm, caprice or buffoonery. At the same time, in summing up the gifts of this eminent actor, it is useless to expect of him attributes that Bocage possessed in such characters as the man *Antony*, and in *La Tour de Nesle*. Bocage and Frédérick combined gave us the qualities that Talma, in his prime, gave us by himself. Frédérick finally returned to the Odéon, where he played le Duresnel in *La Mère et la Fille* most wonderfully; and where he next played *Napoléon*. But Frédérick's great dramatic talents do not stand out most conspicuously in the part of *Napoléon*. To speak of him adequately, we must dwell upon his *Richard Darlington*, *Lucrèce Borgia*, *Kean* and *Ruy Blas*.

In this manner did I stride across the invisible abyss that divided one year from another, and passed from the year 1830 to that of 1831, which brought me insensibly to my twenty-ninth year.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

The Abbé Châtel—The programme of his church—The Curé of Lèves and M. Clausel de Montals—The Lévois embrace the religion of the primate of the Gauls—Mass in French—The Roman curé—A dead body to inter

A TRIPLE movement of a very remarkable character arose at this time: political, literary and social. It seemed as though after the Revolution of 1793, which had shaken, overturned and destroyed things generally, society grew frightened and exerted all its strength upon a general reorganisation. This reconstruction, it is true, was more like that of the Tower of Babel than of Solomon's Temple. We have spoken about the literary builders and of the political too; now let us say something about the social and religious reconstructors.

The first to show signs of existence was the Abbé Châtel.

On 20 February 1831, the French Catholic Church, situated in the Boulevard Saint-Denis opened with this programme—

"The ecclesiastic authorities who constitute the French Catholic Church propose, among other reforms, to celebrate all its religious ceremonies, as soon as circumstances will allow, in the popular tongue. The ministers of this new church exercise the offices of their ministry without imposing any remuneration. The offertory is entirely voluntary; people need not even feel obliged to pay for their seats. No collection of any kind will disturb the meditation of the faithful during the holy offices.

"We do not recognise any other impediments to marriage

than those which are set forth by the civil law. Consequently, we will bestow the nuptial benediction on all those who shall present themselves to us provided with a certificate, proving the marriage to have taken place at the *mairie*, even in the case of one of the contracting parties being of the reformed or other religious sect."

I need hardly say that the Abbé Châtel was excommunicated, put on the index and pronounced a heretic. But he continued saying mass in French all the same, and marrying after the civil code and not after the canons of the Church, and not charging anything for his seats. In spite of the advantages the new order of religious procedure offered, I do not know that it made great progress in Paris. As for its growth in the provinces, I presume it was restricted, or partially so, to one case that I witnessed towards the beginning of 1833.

I was at Levéville, staying at the château of my dear and excellent friend, Auguste Barthélemy, one of those inheritors of an income of thirty thousand francs, who would have created a revolution in society in 1852, if society had not in 1851 been miraculously saved by the *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851, when news was brought to us that the village of Lèves was in a state of open revolution. This village stands like an outpost on the road from Chartres to Paris and to Dreux; so much for its topography. Now, it had the reputation of being one of the most peaceful villages in the whole of the Chartrian country-side, so much for its morality. What unforeseen event could therefore have upset the village of Lèves? This was what had happened—

Lèves possessed that rare article, a curé it adored! He was a fine and estimable priest of about forty years of age, a *bon vivant*, giving men handshakes that made them yell with pain; chucking maidens under their chins till they blushed again; on Sundays being present at the dances with his cassock tucked up into his girdle; which permitted of the display, like Mademoiselle Duchesnois in Alzire, of a well-turned sturdy leg; urging his parishioners to shake off the cares of the week, to the sound of the violin and clarionet; pledging a health

with the deepest of the drinkers, and playing piquet with great proficiency. He was called Abbé Ledru, a fine name which, like those of the first kings of France, seemed to be derived both from his physical and mental qualities. All these qualities (to which should be added the absence of the orthodox niece) were extremely congenial to the natives of Lèves, but were not so fortunate as to be properly appreciated by the Bishop of Chartres, M. Clausel de Montals. True, the absence of a niece, which the Abbé Ledru viewed in the light of an advantage, could prove absolutely nothing, or, rather, it proved this—that the Abbé Ledru had never regarded the tithes as seriously abolished, and, consequently, exacted toll with all the goodwill in the world from his parishioners, or, to speak more accurately, from his female parishioners. M. Clausel de Montals was then, as he is still, one of the strictest prelates among the French clergy; only, now he is twenty years older than he was then, which fact has not tended to soften his rigidness. When Monseigneur de Montals heard rumours, whether true or false, he immediately recalled the Abbé Ledru without asking the opinion of the inhabitants of Lèves, or warning a soul. If a thunderbolt had fallen upon the village of Lèves out of a cloudless sky it could not have produced a more unlooked-for sensation. The husbands cried at the top of their voices that they would keep their curé, the wives cried out even louder than their husbands and the daughters exclaimed loudest of all. The inhabitants of Lèves rose up together and gathered in front of their bereft church; they counted up their numbers, men, women and children; altogether there were between eleven and twelve hundred souls. They dispatched a deputation of four hundred to M. Clausel de Montals. It comprised all the men of between twenty and sixty in the village. The deputation set out; it looked like a small army, except that it was without drums or swords or rifles. Those who had sticks laid them against the town doors lest the sight of them should frighten Monseigneur, the bishop. The deputies presented themselves at the bishop's palace and were shown in. They laid the object of their visit before the

prelate and insistently demanded the reinstatement of the Curé Ledru. M. Clausel de Montals replied after the fashion of Sylla—

"I can at times alter my plans—but my decrees are like those of fate, unalterable!"

They entreated and implored—it was useless!

What was the origin of M. de Montal's hatred towards the poor Abbé Ledru? We will explain it, since these Memoirs were written with the intention of searching to the bottom of things and of laying bare the trifling causes that bring about great results. The Abbé Ledru had subscribed towards those who were wounded during July; he had made a collection in favour of the Poles; he had dressed the drummer of the National Guards of his commune out of his own pocket; in brief, the Abbé Ledru was a patriot; whilst M. de Montals, on the contrary, was not merely an ardent partisan, but also a great friend, of Charles x., and, according to report, one of the instigators of the Ordinances of July. It will be imagined that, after this, the diocese was not large enough to hold both the bishop and the curé within its boundaries. The lesser one had to give in. M. de Montals planted his episcopal sandal upon the Abbé Ledru and crushed him mercilessly!

The deputies returned to those who had sent them. As the Curé Ledru was enjoined to leave the presbytery immediately, a rich farmer in the district offered him a lodging and the church was closed. But, although the church was shut up, the need was still felt for some sort of religion. Now, as the peasantry of Lèves were not very particular as to the sort of religion they had, provided they had something, they made inquiries of the Abbé Ledru if there existed among the many religions of the various peoples of the earth one which would allow them to dispense with M. Clausel de Montals. The Abbé Ledru replied that there was that form of religion practised by the Abbé Châtel, and asked his parishioners if that would suit them. They found it possessed one great advantage in that they could follow the liturgy, which hitherto they had never done, as it was said, in French instead of Latin. The

inhabitants of Lèves pronounced with one common voice, that it was not so much the religion they clung to, as the priest, and that they would be delighted to understand what had hitherto been incomprehensible to them. The Abbé Ledru went to Paris to take a few lessons of the leader of the French church, and, when sufficiently initiated into the new form of religion, he returned to Lèves. His return was made the occasion of a triumphant fête! A splendid barn just opposite their old Roman church, which had been closed more out of the scorn of the Lévois than because of the bishop's anger, was placed at his service and transformed into a place of worship. Everyone, as for the temporary altars at the fête of Corpus Christi, brought his share of adornment; some the covering for the Holy Table, some altar candles, some the crucifix or the ciborium; the carpenter put up the benches; the glazier put glass into the windows; the river supplied the lustral water and all was ready by the following Sunday.

I have already mentioned that we were staying at the Château de Levéville. I did not know the Abbé Châtel and was ignorant of his religious theories; so I thought it a good opportunity for initiating myself into the doctrinè of the primate of the Gauls. I therefore suggested to Barthélemy that we should go and hear the Châtellaisian mass; he agreed and we set off. It was somewhat more tedious than in Latin, as one was almost obliged to listen. But that was the only difference we could discover between the two forms. Of course we were not the only persons in the neighbourhood of Chartres who had been informed of the schism that had broken out between the Church of Lèves and the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church; M. de Montals was perfectly acquainted with what was going on, and had hoped there would be some scandal during the mass for him to carp at: but the mass was celebrated without scandal, and the village of Lèves, which had listened to the whole of the divine office, left the barn quite as much edified as though leaving a proper church.

But the result was fatal; the example might become infectious—people were strongly inclined towards Voltairism in 1830.

The bishop was seized with great anger and, still more, with holy terror. What would happen if all the flock followed the footsteps of the erring sheep? The bishop would be left by himself alone, and his episcopal crook would become useless. A *Roman* priest must at once be supplied to the parish of Lèves, who could combat the *French* curé with whom it had provided itself. The news of this decision reached the Lévois, who again assembled together and vowed to hang the priest, no matter who he was, who should come forward to enter upon the reversion of the office of the Abbé Ledru. An event soon happened which afforded the bishop the opportunity of putting his plan into execution, and for the Lévois to keep their vow. A Lèves peasant died. This peasant, in spite of M. de Montal's declaration, had, before he died, asked for the presence of a Catholic priest, which consolation had been refused him; but, as he was not yet buried, the bishop decided that, as compensation, he should be interred with the full rites of the Latin Church. This happened on Monday, 13 March 1833. On the 14th, Monseigneur, the Bishop of Chartres, despatched to Lèves a curate of his cathedral named the Abbé Duval. The choice was a good one and suitable under the circumstances. The Abbé Duval was by no means one of that timid class of men who are soon made anxious and frightened by the least thing; he was, on the contrary, a man of energetic character with a fine carriage, whose tall figure was quite as well adapted to the wearing of the cuirass of a carabinier as of a priest's cassock. So the Abbé Duval started on his journey. He was not in entire ignorance of the dangers he was about to incur; but he was unconscious of the fact that no missionary entering any Chinese or Thibetan town had ever been so near to martyrdom. The report of the Roman priest's arrival soon spread through the village of Lèves. Everybody at once retired into his house and shut his doors and windows. The poor abbé might at first have imagined that he had been given the cure of a city of the dead like Herculaneum or Pompeii. But, when he reached the centre of the village, he saw that all the doors opened surreptitiously and the windows were slily raised a little;

and in a minute he and the mayor, who accompanied him, were surrounded by about thirty peasants who called upon him to go back. We must do the mayor and abbé the justice to say that they tried to offer resistance; but, at the end of a quarter of an hour, the cries became so furious and the threats so terrible, that the mayor took the advantage of being within reach of his house to slink away and shut the door behind him, abandoning the Abbé Duval to his unhappy fate. It was extremely mean on the part of the mayor, but what can one expect! Every magistrate is not a Bailly, just as every president is not a Boissy-d'Anglais—consult, rather, M. Sauzet, M. Buchez and M. Dupin! Luckily for the poor abbé, at this critical moment a member of the council of the préfecture who was well known and much respected by the inhabitants of Lèves passed by in his carriage, inquired the cause of the uproar, pronounced in favour of the abbé, took possession of him and drove him back to Chartres.

Meanwhile the dead man waited on!

CHAPTER II

Fine example of religious toleration—The Abbé Dallier—The Circes of Lèves—Waterloo after Leipzig—The Abbé Dallier is kept as hostage—The barricades—The stones of Chartres—The outlook—Preparations for fighting

ALTHOUGH the Lévois had liberated their prisoner, they realised, none the less, that war was declared; threats and coarse words had been hurled at the bishop's head, but they knew his grace's character too well to expect that he would consider himself defeated. That did not matter, though! They had made up their minds to push their faith in the new religion to the extreme test of martyrdom, if need be! In the meantime, as there was nothing better to do, they proposed to get rid of the dead man, the innocent cause of all this rumpus. He had, it was said, abjured the Abbé Ledru with his last breath; but it was not an assured fact and the report might even have been set about by the bishop! moreover, new forms of religion are tolerant: the Abbé Ledru knew that he must lay the foundations of his on the side of leniency; he forgave the dead man his momentary defection, supposing he had one, said a French mass for him and buried him according to the rites of the Abbé Chatel! Alas! the poor dead man seemed quite indifferent to the tongue in which they intoned mass over him and the manner in which they buried him! They waited from 24 March until 29 April—nearly six weeks—before receiving any fresh attack from high quarters, and before the bishop showed any signs of his existence. The Abbé Ledru continued to say mass, and the Lévois thought they were fully authorised to follow the rite that suited them best for the good of their souls.

But Sunday, 29 April, came at last, the date which the bishop and préfet had fixed for the re-opening of the Roman Church and the installation of a new priest. In the morning, a squadron of the 4th regiment of rifles and a half section of the gendarmerie came and took up their position in front of the church. An hour later than the soldiers, the Préfet of Rigny arrived, also the commander-general of the department and the chief of the gendarmerie. They brought with them a new abbé, Abbé Dallier. This priest came supported by a respectable body of armed force to reinstate the true God in the church. Things began to wear the look of a parody from the *Lutrin*. Notwithstanding all this, the whole of the population of Lèves had gradually collected in the street that we will call La rue des Grands-Prés, although I am very much afraid that we are really its spouses. To prevent the re-opening of the Latin Church, the women, who were even more bitter than the men against the re-opening, had crowded themselves together under the porch. The préfet tried to break through their ranks, followed by a locksmith; for the Lévois threw the keys of the church into the river when the Abbé Duval arrived. As the locksmith possessed no claims of an administrative nature, it was to him they addressed their outcries and threats. These rose to such a swelling diapason that the poor devil took fright and fled. It will be seen that the protection of the préfet only half assured him. The example proved contagious: for, whether the préfet in his turn gave way to fright at these cries, whether, without the locksmith, any attempts to open the church doors were useless, he too beat a retreat. It is true, however, that they had just told him that the riflemen—seduced by the blandishments of the women of Lèves, as the King of Ithaca's companions were by the witchcraft of Circe—had forgotten themselves so far before the arrival of the authorities above mentioned, as to shout: "Vive l'Abbé Ledru!" "Vive l'Église française!" It was rather a seditious cry, at a period when the army neither voted nor deliberated! Whatever the cause, the préfet, as we have said, beat a retreat. Just at this moment the Abbé Ledru

appeared at the door of his barn. Four women at once constituted themselves as alms-collectors, using their outstretched aprons as alms-boxes. The total of the four collections was employed in the purchase of eau-de-vie for the soldiers. Was it the Abbé Ledru who gave such corrupt advice? or was it, indeed, the alms-collectors' own idea? Woman is ever deceitful and the devil sly! The soldiers, after shouting "Vive l'Abbé Ledru!" drank to that abbé's health and to the supremacy of the French Church—this was, indeed, a serious thing! If he had known how to take advantage of the frame of mind the soldiers were in, the Abbé Ledru would have been equal to laying siege to Rome, as did the Constable of Bourbon. But his ambition, probably, fell short of this and he did not even make the suggestion.

Meanwhile, the préfet, the general-commander of the department and the chief of the gendarmerie were debating at the mairie as to the action they should take. The officers of the riflemen felt that their men were almost escaping from their control: the squadron threatened to appoint the primate of the Gauls as its chaplain, and to proclaim that, if the Roman Catholic religion was the ritual of the State the French form should be that of the Army. It was decided to send for the king's attorney, who was supposed to have a shrewd head. He arrived an hour later with two deputies and a judge. The squadron of riflemen continued drinking the health of the Abbé Ledru and to the supremacy of the French Church. Reinforced by four magistrates, the préfet, commander-general of the department and chief of the gendarmerie took their way to the rue des Grands-Prés. The street was now literally packed. They meant to make a second attempt upon the church. They had reckoned that this body of military dignitaries, civil and magisterial, would have an awe-inspiring effect on the crowd. Bah! the people only began shouting at the top of their voices—

"Down with the Carlists!" "Down with the Jesuits!" "Down with the bishop!" . . . "Long live the King and the French Church!"

The préfet tried to speak, the king's attorney tried to demand, the deputies tried threats, the judge to open the code, the general tried to draw his sword, the chief of the gendarmerie attempted to flourish his sabre; but every one of their efforts were frustrated and drowned in the singing of *La Parisienne* and *La Marseillaise*. These gentlemen had a good mind to make the call to arms, but the attitude of the troop was too doubtful for them to risk the chance. The préfet withdrew a second time, followed by the general, chief of gendarmerie, king's attorney, deputies and the judge. It was a case of Waterloo after Leipzig! A minute later, the troop received orders to quit the rue des Grands-Prés; and, as there was nothing hostile against the population in such an order, the troop obeyed. Soldiers and inhabitants embraced and fraternised and drank together for the third time, then separated. The Lévois believed that the préfet had definitely renounced the idea of opening the church; but their delusion was not of long duration. News came to them that an orderly had been sent off to Chartres, charged with the commission of bringing back another squadron of rifles and all the reinforcements they could possibly muster. Whereupon the cry of "To arms!" was set up. At this war cry, a man in a cassock attempted to fly—it was the Abbé Dallier, who had been completely forgotten by the préfet, general, chief of gendarmerie, king's attorney, the two deputies and the judge, in their precipitation to beat a retreat! The poor abbé was caught by his cassock and made prisoner and shut up in a cellar, while they announced to him, through the grating, that he was to be kept as hostage and that if the slightest injury happened to any inhabitant of the village commune, the penalty of retaliation would be applied to him in full force. They next began to construct barricades at each end of the rue des Grands-Prés, where stood, as we know, both the Latin and French churches. For the material wherewith to build these barricades, which rose up as quick as thought, a wooden shoemaker gave three or four beams, a carter brought two or three waggons, the schoolmaster took his desks and the inhabitants made an

offering of their shutters. The street lads collected heaps of stones.

I do not know whether my readers are acquainted with the Chartres stones; they are pretty ones that vary from the size of a pigeon's egg to that of an ostrich, and when broken, either by art or nature, they show an edge as sharp as that of a razor. Chartres is partly paved with these stones, and the paviors are usually careful to place the sharp edges upwards so that the pedestrian's boots may come in contact with them; which makes one think with some justification that the worthy guild of shoemakers must give the paviors a consideration. One of my friends, Noël Parfait, a true Chartrian, and jealous, as are all true-hearted patriots, of the honour of his country, maintains that Chartres was once a seaport, and that these stones are clearly the shingle that the ocean swell threw up on the beach in former times. In an hour's time, there was enough ammunition behind each barricade to hold a siege for eight days. Projectiles, also, grew under the hands, or rather, the feet, of the providers. One individual climbed the church tower, to watch the Chartres road in order to sound the alarm as soon as the troop appeared in sight. The Abbé Ledru blessed the fighters, and invoked the God of armies in French; then they waited, ready for anything that might happen. All these preparations had been made in sight of the riflemen and gendarmes who, withdrawn to the Grand-Rue, looked on at all these preparations for fighing without protest. Truly, the wretched fellows were won over to heresy.

Ten minutes after the finishing of the barricades, the alarm bell sounded. It signified that troops had left Chartres. These troops were preceded by a locksmith, who was brought under the escort of two gendarmes; but the man was so railed at by the Abbé Ledru's fierce sectaries, as soon as the first houses in Lèves were reached, that he took advantage of a momentary hesitation on the part of the two gendarmes to slip between the legs of the one on his right, reach a garden and disappear into the fields! This was the second locksmith that melted away out of the clutch of authority. It reminds

one of those rearguards of the army of Russia which slipped through Ney's hands! The new troops came on the scene full of alacrity. Care was taken that they did not come into contact with the disaffected squadron, and they decided to take the barricades by main force. But, at the same time, about thirty Chartrain patriots hurried up to the assistance of the insurgents—amateurs, desirous of taking their part in the dangers of their brothers of Lèves. They were greeted with shouts of joy; *La Parisienne* and *La Marseillaise* were thundered forth more loudly, and the tocsin rang more wildly than ever! The préfet and the general headed the riflemen, and the force marched up to the barricade.

CHAPTER III

Attack of the barricade—A sequel to Malplaquet—The Grenadier—The Chartrian philanthropists—Sack of the bishop's palace—A fancy dress—How order was restored—The culprits both small and great—Death of the Abbé Ledru—Scruples of conscience of the former schismatics—The *Dies iræ* of Kosciusko

AT this period it was still usual to summon the insurgents to withdraw, and this the préfet did. They responded by a hailstorm of stones, one of them hitting the general. This time, he lost all patience and shouted—

"Forward!" and the men charged the barricade sword in hand. The Lévois made a splendid resistance, but a dozen or more riflemen managed to clear the obstacle; however, when they reached the other side of the barricade, they were overwhelmed with stones, thrown down and disarmed. Blood had flowed on both sides; and temper was roused to boiling point; it would have gone badly with the dozen prisoners if some men, who were either less heated or more prudent than the rest, had not carried them off and thus saved their lives. Let us confess, with no desire whatever of casting a slur on the army, which we would uphold at all times, and, nowadays, more than ever, that, from that moment, every attempt of the riflemen to take the barricade failed! But what else can be said? It is a matter of history; as are Poitiers, Agincourt and Malplaquet! A shower of stones fell, compared with which the one that annihilated the Amalekites was but an April shower.

The préfet and the general finally decided to give up the enterprise; they sounded the retreat and took their road back

to Chartres. As the insurgents did not know what to do with their prisoners, and being afraid of a siege, and not having any desire to burden themselves with useless mouths, the riflemen were released on parole. They could not believe in the retreat of the troops; it was in vain the watchmen in the tower shouted, "Victory!" The conviction did not really take hold of the minds of the Lévois until their look-out declared that the last soldier had entered Chartres. Such being the case, it was but one step to turn from doubt to boldness: they began by giving aid to the wounded; then, as no signs of any uniforms reappeared upon the high road, by degrees they grew bolder, until they arrived at such a pitch of enthusiasm that one of the insurgents, having ventured the suggestion that they should march the Abbé Dallier round the walls of Chartres, as Achilles had led Hector round the walls of Pergamus, the proposition was received with acclamation. But, as the vanquished man was alive and not dead, they put a rope round his neck instead of round his ankles and the other end was placed in the hands of one of the Abbé Ledru's most excited penitents, who went by the name of the *Grenadier*. I need hardly add that the penitent's name was, like that of the Abbé Ledru, conspicuous for the physical and moral qualities of a virago. Every man filled his pockets with stones in readiness for attack or defence, and the folk set out for Chartres, escorting the condemned man, who marched towards martyrdom with visible distaste. It is half a league between Lèves and Chartres; and that half league was a real Via Dolorosa to the poor priest. The Lévois had calculated to perfection what they were doing when they gave the rope's end to the care of the Grenadier. When the savages of Florida wish to inflict extreme punishment on any of their prisoners they hand the criminals over to the women and children. When the victors reached Chartres, they did not find the opposition they had looked for; but they found something else equally unexpected: they saw neither préfet, nor general, nor chief of the gendarmerie, nor king's attorney, neither deputies nor judges; but several philanthropists approached them and made them

listen to what was styled, at the end of last century, the language of reason—

It was not the poor priest's fault that he had been selected by the bishop to replace the Abbé Ledru; he did not know in what esteem his parishioners held him, he was neither more nor less blameworthy than his predecessor, the Abbé Duval; and when the one had come to a flock of sheep, why should another priest fall among a band of tigers? It was the fault of the bishop, who had instantly and brutally deposed the Abbé Ledru, and then had the audacity to appoint first one and then another successor!

Upon this very reasonable discourse, the scales fell from the eyes of the inhabitants of Lèves, as from Saint Paul's, and they began to see things in their true light. The effect of their enlightenment was to make them untie the rope and to let the Abbé Dallier go free with many apologies. But, at the same time, it was unanimously agreed that, since there was a rope all ready, the bishop should be hanged with it.

When people conceive such brilliant ideas, they lose no time in putting them into execution. So they directed their steps rapidly in the direction of M. Clausel de Montal's sumptuous dwelling-place. But although these avenging spirits had made all diligence, M. Clausel de Montals had made still greater; to such an extent that, when the hangmen arrived at the bishop's palace, they could nowhere find him whom they had come to hang: Monseigneur the bishop had departed, and with very good reason too! We know what happens under such circumstances; things pay for men, and the bishop's palace had to pay instead of the bishop. This was the era of sacrilege; the sacking of the palace of the Archbishop of Paris had set the fashion of the destruction of religious houses. They broke the window panes and the mirrors over the mantelpieces, they tore down the curtains, and transformed them into banners. Finally, they reached the billiard room, where they fenced with the cues, and threw the balls at each other's heads, whilst a sailor neatly cut off the cloth from the billiard table,

which he rolled into a ball and tucked under his arm. Three or four days later, he had made a coat, waistcoat and trousers out of it, and promenaded the streets of Lèves, amidst the enthusiastic applause of his fellow-citizens, clad entirely in green cloth, like one of the Earl of Lincoln's archers! But the life the Lévois led in the palace was too delightful to last for long; authority bestirred itself; they brought the riflemen out of their barracks once more, and beat the rappel, and, a certain number of the National Guard having taken up arms, they directed their combined forces upon the palace. The attack was too completely unexpected for the spoilers to dream of offering resistance. They went further than that, and, instead of the wise retreat one would have expected from men who had vanquished the troops which one is accustomed to call the best in the world, they took to flight as rapidly as possible: leaping out of the windows into the garden and scaling the walls, they ran across the fields and regained Lèves in complete disorder. That same night every trace of barricading disappeared. Next day, each inhabitant of Lèves attended to his work or play or business. They were thinking nothing about the recent events, when, suddenly, they saw quite an army arriving at Chartres from Paris, Versailles and Orléans. This army was carrying twenty pieces of artillery with it. It was commanded by General Schramm, and was coming to restore order. Order had been re-established for the last fortnight, unassisted! That did not matter, however; seeing there had been disorder, they were marching on Lèves to carry out a razzia.

The threatened village quietly watched this left-handed justice approach: its eleven to twelve hundred inhabitants modestly stood at their doors and windows. Peace and innocence reigned throughout from east to west, from north to south; anyone entering might have thought it the valley of Tempe, when Apollo tended the flocks of King Admetus. The inhabitants of Lèves looked as though they were the actors in that play (I cannot recall which it is), where Odry had sent for the commissary at the wrong moment and, when the com-

missary arrived, everybody was in unity again; so that everybody asked in profound surprise—

"Who sent for a commissary? Did you? or you? or you?"

"No. . . . I asked for a commissionaire," replied Odry; "just an ordinary messenger, that is all!" and the agent took himself off abashed and with empty hands.

That happened in the piece, but not exactly in the same way at Lèves. A score of persons were arrested, and these were divided into two categories: the least guilty and the most guilty. The least guilty were handed over to the jurisdiction of the police; the guiltiest were sent before the Court of Assizes. A very curious thing resulted from this separation. At that time, the *police correctionelle* always sentenced, whilst the jury acquitted only too eagerly. The least guilty men who appeared before the *police correctionnelle* were found guilty, while the most culpable, who were tried before a jury, were acquitted. The sailor in the green cloth was one of the most guilty, and was produced before the jury as an indisputable piece of evidence. The jury declared that billiard tables had not a monopoly for clothing in green; that if a citizen liked to dress like a billiard table, why! political opinions were free, so a man surely might indulge his individual fancy in his style of dress. The religious question was decided in favour of the French Church, and this decision lasted as long as the Abbé Ledru himself, namely, four or five years; during which period of time the parish of Lèves was separated from the general religion of the kingdom, in France, without producing any great sensation. At the end of that time, the Abbé Ledru committed the stupidity of dying. I am unaware in what tongue and rites he was interred; but I do know that, the day after his death, the Lévois asked the bishop for another priest, and this bishop proved a kind father to his prodigal children and sent them one.

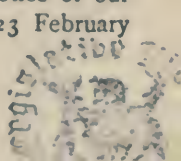
The third was received with as many honours as the two previously appointed had been received with insults on their arrival. The French Church was closed, the Roman Catholic religion re-established, and the new priest returned

to the old presbytery; the Grenadier became the most fervent and humble of his penitents, and the tongue of Cicero and Tacitus again became the dominical one of the Lévois, returned to the bosom of Holy Church.

But Barthélemy wrote to me, a little time ago, that there were serious scruples in some weak minds. Were the infants baptised, the adults married, and the old people buried by the Abbé Ledru during his schism with Gregory XVI., really properly baptised and married and buried? It did not matter to the baptised souls, who could return and be baptised by an orthodox hand; nor again to the married ones, who had but to have a second mass said over them and to pass under the canopy once more, but it mattered terribly to the dead; for they could neither be sought for nor recognised one from another. Happily God will recognise those whom the blindness of human eyes prevents from seeing, and I am sure that He will forgive the Lévois their temporary heresy for the sake of their good intention.

This event, and the conversion of Casimir Delavigne to the observances of the French religion, were the culminating points in the fortunes of the Abbé Châtel, primate of the Gauls. Casimir Delavigne, who gave his sanction to all new phases of power; who sanctioned the authority of Louis XVIII. in his play entitled, *Du besoin de s'unir après le départ des étrangers*; who sanctioned the prerogative of Louis-Philippe in his immortal, or say rather everlasting, *Parisienne*; Casimir Delavigne sanctioned the authority of the primate of the Gauls by his translation of the *Dies iræ*, *dies illa*, which was chanted by Abbé Châtel's choristers at the mass which the latter said in French at the funeral service of Kosciusko. The Abbé Châtel possessed this good quality, that he openly declared for the people as against kings.

Here is the poem; it is little known and deserves to be better known than it is. It is, therefore, in the hope of increasing its reputation that we bring it to the notice of our readers. It was sung at the French Church on 23 February 1831:—



"Jour de colère, jour de larmes,
Où le sort, qui trahit nos armes,
Arrêta son vol glorieux !

A tes côtés, ombre chérie,
Elle tomba, notre patrie,
Et ta main lui ferma les yeux !

Tu vis, de ses membres livides,
Les rois, comme des loups avides,
S'arracher les lambeaux épars :

Le fer, dégouttant de carnage,
Pour en grossir leur héritage,
De son cadavre fit trois parts.

La Pologne ainsi partagée,
Quel bras humain l'aurait vengée ?
Dieu seul pouvait la secourir !

Toi-même tu la crus sans vie ;
Mais, son cœur, c'était Varsovie :
Le feu sacré n'y put mourir !

Que ta grande ombre se relève ;
Secoue, en reprenant ton glaive,
Le sommeil de l'éternité !

J'entends le signal des batailles,
Et le chant de tes funérailles
Est un hymne de liberté !

Tombez, tombez, boiles funèbres !
La Pologne sort des ténèbres,
Fèconde en nouveaux dèfenseurs !

Par la liberté ranimée,
De sa chaîne elle s'est armée
Pour en frapper ses oppresseurs.

Cette main qu'elle te présente
Sera bientôt libre et sanglante ;
Tends-lui la main du haut des cieux.

Descends pour venger ses injures,
Ou pour entourer ses blessures
De ton linceul victorieux.

Si cette France qu'elle appelle,
Trop loin—ne pent vaincre avec elle,
Que Dieu, du moins, soit son appui.

Trop haut, si Dieu ne peut l'entendre,
Eh bien ! mourons pour la défendre,
Et nous irons nous plaindre à lui !"

We do not believe to-day that the Abbé Châtel is dead; but, if we judge of his health by the cobwebs which adorn the hinges and bolts of the French Church, we shall not be afraid to assert that he is very ill indeed.

CHAPTER IV

The Abbé de Lamennais—His prediction of the Revolution of 1830—Enters the Church—His views on the Empire—Casimir Delavigne, Royalist—His early days—Two pieces of poetry by M. de Lamennais—His literary vocation—*Essay on Indifference in Religious Matters*—Reception given to this book by the Church—The academy of the château de la Chesnaie

WE now ask permission to approach a more serious subject, and to dedicate this chapter (were it only for the purpose of forming a contrast with the preceding chapters) to one of the finest and greatest of modern geniuses, to the Abbé de Lamennais. We speak of a period two months after the Revolution of 1830.

Out of the wilds of Brittany, that is, from the château de la Chesnaie, there appeared a priest of forty, small of stature, nervous and pale, with stubbly hair, and high forehead, the head compressed at the sides as though it were enclosed by walls of bone; a sign, according to Gall, indicative of the absence in man of cupidity, cunning and acquisitiveness; the nose long, with dilated nostrils, denoting high intelligence, according to Lavater; and, last, a piercing glance and a determined chin. Everything connected with the man's external appearance revealed his Celtic origin. Such was the Abbé DE LA MENNAIS, whose name was written in three different ways, like that of M. DE LA MARTINE, each different way in which he wrote it indicating the different phases of the development of his mind and the progress of his opinion. We say of his opinion and not opinions, for these three phases, as in Raphael's three styles, mean, not a change of style, but a perfecting of style.

Into the thick of the agitation going on in silent thought or

open speech, the austere Breton came to teach the world a word they had not expected; in fact at that time M. de la Mennais was looked upon as a supporter of both *Throne* and *Church*. The throne had just fallen, and the Church was shaking violently from the changes which the events of 1830 had wrought in social institutions. But the world was mistaken with regard to the views of the great writer, because it only saw in him the author of *L'Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, a strange book, in which that virile imagination strove against his century, struggling with the spirit of the times, as Jacob strove with the angel. People forgot that in 1828, during the Martignac Ministry, the same de Lamennais had hurled a book into the controversy which had predicted a certain degree of intellectual revival: I refer to *Du progrès de la Revolution et de la guerre contre l'Église*. In this book, the Revolution of 1830 was foretold as an inevitable event. Listen carefully to his words—

"And even to-day when there no longer really exists any government, since it has become the tool and the plaything of the boldest or of the most powerful; to-day, when democracy triumphs openly, is there any more calm in its own breast? Could one find, moreover, no matter what the nature of his opinions may be, one man, one single man, who desires what is, and who *desires only that and nothing more?* Never, on the other hand, has he more eagerly longed for a new order of things; *everybody cries out for, the whole world is calling for, a revolution, whether they admit it or are conscious of it themselves.* Yes, it will come, because it is imperative that nations shall be unitedly educated and chastised; *because, according to the common laws of Providence, a revolution is indispensable for the preparation of a true social regeneration. France will not be the only scene of action: it will extend everywhere where Liberalism rules either in doctrine or in sentiment; and under this latter form it is universal.*"

In the preface to the same book, M. de Lamennais had already said—

"That France and Europe are marching towards fresh revolutions is now apparent to everybody. The most un-

daunted hopes which have fed themselves for long on interest or stupidity give way before the evidence of facts, in the face of which it is no longer possible for anyone to delude himself. Nothing can remain as it is, everything is unsettled, totters towards a change. *Conturbatæ sunt gentes et inclinata sunt regna.*"

We underline nothing in this second paragraph because we should have to underline the whole. Let us pass on to the last words of the book—

"The time is coming when it will be said *to those who are in darkness*: 'Behold the light!' And they will arise, and, with gaze fixed on that divine radiance will, with repentance and surprise, yet filled with joy, worship that spirit which restores all disorder, reveals all truth, enlightens every intelligence: *oriens ex alto.*"

The above expressions are those of a prophet as well as of a poet; they reveal what neither the Guizots, the Molés, the Broglies, nor even the Casimir Périers saw, nor, indeed, any of those we are accustomed to style *statesmen* foresaw.

In this work M. de Lamennais appealed solemnly "for the alliance of Catholics with all sincere Liberal spirits." This book is really in some measure the hinge on which turned the gate through which M. de Lamennais passed from his first political phase to the second.

M. de Lamennais was born at St. Malo, in the house next to that in which Chateaubriand was born, and a few yards only from that in which Broussais came into the world. So that the old peaceful town gave us, in less than fifteen years, Chateaubriand, Broussais and Lamennais, names representative of the better part of the poetry, science and philosophy of the first half of the nineteenth century. M. de Lamennais had, like Chateaubriand, passed his childhood by the sea, had listened to the roar of the ocean, watching the waves which are lost to sight on infinite horizons, eternally returning to break against the cliffs, as the human wave returns to break itself against invincible necessity. He preserved, I recollect (for one feature in my existence coincided with that of the author of *Paroles*

d'un Croyant), he preserved, I repeat, from his earliest childhood, the vivid and clear recollections which he connected with the grand and rugged scenery of his beloved Brittany.

"I can still hear," he said to us, at a dinner where the principal guests were himself, the Abbé Lacordaire, M. de Montalembert, Listz and myself—"the cry of certain sea-birds which passed *barking* over my head. Some of those rocks, which have looked down pityingly for numberless centuries upon the angry impotent waves which perish at their feet, are stocked with ancient legends."

M. de Lamennais related one of these in his *une Voix de prison*. It is that of a maiden who, overtaken by the tide, on a reef of rocks, tied her hair to the stems of sea-weeds to keep herself from being washed off by the motion of the waves, far away from her native land.

M. de Lamennais's youth was stormy and undisciplined. He loved physical exercises, hunting, fencing, racing and riding; strange tastes these, as preparation for an ecclesiastical career! But it was not from personal inclination or of his own impulse that he entered the priesthood, but by compulsion from the noble families in the district. On his part, the bishop of the diocese discerned in the young man a superior intellect, a lofty character, a tendency towards meditation and thoughtfulness, and drew him to himself by all kinds of seductions. They spared him the trials of an ecclesiastical seminary, at which his intractable disposition might have rebelled; but, priest though he was, M. de Lamennais did not discontinue to ride the most fiery horses of the town, or to practise shooting. It was the Empire, that régime of glory and of despotism, which wounded the sensitive nerves of the young priest of stern spirit and Royalist sympathies. Brittany remembered her exiled princes, and the family of M. de Lamennais was among those which faithfully preserved the worship of the past; not that their family was of ancient nobility: the head of the house was a shipowner who had made his wealth by distant voyages, and who was ennobled at the close of the last century for services rendered to the town of St. Malo. The Empire fell, and M. de

Lamennais, casting a bird's-eye view over that stupendous ruin, wrote in 1815—

"Wars of extermination sprang up again; despotism counted her expenditure in men, as people reckon the revenue of an estate; generations were mowed down like grass; and men daily sold, bought, exchanged and given away like flocks of little value, often not even knowing whose property they were, to such an extent did a monstrous policy multiply these infamous transactions! Whole nations were put in circulation like pieces of money!"

To profess such principles was, of course, equivalent to looking towards the Restoration, that dawn without a sun. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, in those days, all young men of letters were carried away with the same intoxication for monarchical memories. Poets are like women—I do not at all know who said that poets were women—they make much of a favourable misfortune. This enthusiasm for *the person of the king* was shared, in different degrees, even by men whose names, later, were connected with Liberalism. Heaven alone knows whether any king was ever less fitted than Louis XVIII. for calling forth tenderness and idolatry! But that did not hinder Casimir Delavigne from exclaiming—

"Henri, divin Henri, toi que fus grand et bon,
Qui chassas l'Espagnol, et finis nos misères,
Les partis sont d'accord en prononçant ton nom;
Henri, de les enfants fais un peuple de frères!
Ton image déjà semble nous protéger:
Tu renais! avec toi renaît l'indépendance!
O roi le plus Français dont s'honore la France,
Il est dans ton destin de voir fuir l'étranger!
Et toi, son digne fils, après vingt ans d'orage,
Règne sur des sujets par toi-même ennoblis;
Leurs droits sont consacrés dans ton plus bel ouvrage.
Oui, ce grand monument, affermi d'âge en âge,
Doit couvrir de son ombre et le peuple et les lys
Il est des opprimés l'asile impérissable,
La terreur du tyran, du ministre coupable,
Le temple de nos libertés!

Que la France prospère en tes mains magnanimes ;
Que tes jours soient sereins, tes décrets respectés,
Toi qui proclames ces maximes :
'O rois, pour commander, obéissez aux lois !
Peuple, en obéissant, sois libre sous tes rois !'"

True, fifteen years later, the author of *La Semaine de Paris* sang, almost in the same lines of the accession to the throne of King Louis-Philippe. Rather read for yourself—

"O toi, roi citoyen, qu'il presse dans ses bras,
Aux cris d'un peuple entier dont les transports sont justes
Tu fus mon bienfaiteur . . . Je ne te loûrai pas :
Les poëtes des rois sont leurs actes augustes.
Que ton règne te chante, et qu'on dise après nous :
'Monarque, il fut sacré par la raison publique ;
Sa force fut la loi ; l'honneur, sa politique ;
Son droit divin, l'amour de tous !'"

Let us read again the lines we have just quoted—those which were addressed to Louis XVIII. we mean—and we shall see that Victor Hugo, Lamartine and Lamennais never expressed their delight at the return of the Bourbons in more endearing terms than did Casimir Delavigne.. What, then, was the reason why the Liberals of that day and the Conservatives of to-day bitterly reproached the first three of the above-mentioned authors for these pledges of affection for the Elder Branch, whilst they always ignored or pretended to ignore the covert royalism of the author of *Messéniennes*? Ah! Heavens! It is because the former were sincere in their blind, young enthusiasm, whilst the latter—let us be allowed to say it—was not. The world forgives a political untruth, but it does not forgive a conscientious recantation of the foolish mistakes of a generously sympathetic heart. In the generous pity of these three authors for the Bourbon family there was room for the shedding of a tear for Marie-Antoinette and for Louis XVII.

M. de Lamennáis hesitated, for a while, over his literary vocation, or at least, over the direction it should take. The solitude in which he had lived, by the sea, had filled his soul

with floating dreams, like those beauteous clouds he had often watched with his outward eyes in the depths of the heavens. He was within an ace of writing novels and works of fiction; he did even get so far as to write some poetry, which, of course, he never published. Here are two lines, which entered, as far as I can remember, into a description of scholastic theology—

> "Elle avait deux grands yeux stupidement ouverts,
> Dont l'un ne voyait pas ou voyait de travers!"

M. de Lamennais then became a religious writer and a philosopher more from force of circumstances than from inclination. His taste, he assured us in his moments of expansion, upon which we look back with respect and pride, would have led him by preference towards that style of poetical prose-writing which Bernardin de Saint-Pierre had made fashionable in *Paul et Virginie*, and Chateaubriand in *René*. So he communed with himself and, with the unerring finger of the implacable genius of the born observer, he touched upon the wound of his century—indifference to religious matters. Surely the cry uttered by that gloomy storm-bird, "the gods are departing!" had good reason for startling the pious folk and statesmen of that period! Were not the churches filled with missions and the high roads crowded with missionaries? Was there not the cross of Migné, the miracles of the Prince of Hohenlohe, the apparitions and trances of Martin de Gallardon and others? What, then, could this man mean? M. de Lamennais took, as the motto for his book, these words from the Bible—

"*Impius, cum in profundum venerit contemnit.*"

In his opinion, contempt was the sign by which he recognised the decline of religious feeling. The seventeenth century believed, the eighteenth denied, the nineteenth doubted.

The success of the book was immense. France, agitated by vast and conflicting problems, a Babel wherein many voices were speaking simultaneously, in every kind of tongue,

the France of the Empire, of the Restoration, of Carbonarism, of Liberalism and of Republicanism, held its peace to listen to the weighty and inspired utterance of this unknown writer: "*et siluit terra in conspectu ejus*!" The voice came from the desert. Who had seen, who knew this man? He had dropped from the region where eagles dwell; his name was mentioned by all lips, in the same breath with that of Bossuet. *L'Essai sur l'indifférence* was little read but much admired; the poets—they are the only people who read—recognised in it a powerful imagination, at times almost an affrighted imagination, which, both by its excesses and its terrors, hugged, as it were, the dead body of religious belief, and shook it roughly, hoping against hope, to bring it back to life again. Of all prose-writers, Tacitus was the one whom the Abbé de Lamennais admired the most; of all poets, Dante was the one he read over and over again the most frequently; of all books, the one he knew by heart was the Bible.

Now, it might assuredly have been believed that this citadel, intended to protect the weak walls of Catholicism, *L'Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, was viewed with favourable eyes by the French clergy; no such thing! Quite the contrary; a cry went up from the heart of the Church, not of joy or admiration, but of terror. They were scared by the genius of the man; religion was no longer in the habit of having an Origen, a Tertullian, or a Bossuet to defend it; it was afraid of being supported by such a defender and, little by little, the shudder of fear reached even as far as Rome; and the book was very nearly placed on the *Index*. These suspicions were aroused by the nature of the arguments of which the author made use to repel the attacks of philosophers. The Abbé de Lamennais foresaw, through the gloom, the causes at work undermining the old edifice of orthodoxy, and tried to put it on a wider basis of toleration and to prop it up, as he himself expressed it, by the exercise of common sense. To this end he made incredible flights into metaphysical realms, to prove that Catholicism was, and always had been, the religion of Humanity.

The Abbé de Lamennais taught in the seminaries, but his teaching was looked upon with suspicion; and young people were forbidden the reading of a work, which the outside world regarded as that of a misguided god who wanted to deny man the right of freedom of thought. No suicide was ever more heroic, never did intellect bring so much courage and logic to the task of self-destruction. But, in reality, and from his point of view, the Abbé de Lamennais was right: if you believe in an infallible Church you must bravely destroy the eyes of your intellect and extinguish the light of your soul, and, having voluntarily made yourself blind, let yourself be led by the hand. But, however high a solitary intellect may be placed, it is very quickly reached by the influence of the times in which it lives.

Two or three years ago, an æronautic friend of mine, Petin, seriously propounded to me *viva voce*, and to the world through the medium of the daily papers, that he had just solved the great problem of ærial navigation. He reasoned thus—

"The earth turns—*E pur si muove*!—and in the motion of rotation on its own axis, it successively presents every part of its surface, both inhabited and uninhabited. Now, any person, who could raise himself up into the extreme strata of ambient air, and could find a means to keep himself there, would be able to descend in a balloon and alight upon whatever town on the globe he liked; he would only have to wait until that town passed beneath his feet; in that way he could go to the Antipodes in a dozen hours, and without any fatigue whatsoever, since he would not stir from his position, as it would be the earth which would move for him."

This calculation had but one flaw: it was false. The earth, in its vast motion, carries with it every atom of the molecules of its seething atmosphere. It is the same with great spirits which aim at stability; without perceiving that, at the very moment when they think they have cast anchor in the Infinite, they wake up to find they are being carried away in spite of themselves by the irresistible movement of their age. The spirit of Liberalism, with which the atmosphere of the time was charged, carried away the splendid, obstinate and lonely

reason of the Abbé de Lamennais. It was about the year 1828. Whilst fighting against the Doctrinaire School, for which he showed a scarcely veiled contempt, M. de Lamennais sought to combine the needs of faith with the necessities of progress; with this end in view he had installed at his château at La Chesnaie a school of young people whom he inculcated with his religious ideas. La Chesnaie was an ancient château of Brittany, shaded by sturdy, centenarian oaks—those natural philosophers, which ponder while their leaves rustle in the breeze on the vicissitudes of man, of which changes they are impassive witnesses. There, this priest, who was already troubled by the new spirit abroad, educated and communed with disciples who held on from far or near to the Church; amongst them were the Abbé Gerbert, Cyprien Robert, now professor of Slavonic literature in the College of France, and a few others. Work—methodical and persevering—was carried on within those old walls, which the sea winds rocked and lashed against. This new academy of Pythagoras studied the science of the century in order to combat it; but, at each fresh ray of light, it recoiled enlightened, and its recoil put weapons to be used against itself into the hands of the enemy. That enemy was Human Thought.

CHAPTER V

The founding of *l'Avenir*—L'Abbé Lacordaire—M. Charles de Montalembert—His article on the sacking of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois—*l'Avenir* and the new literature—My first interview with M. de Lamennais—Lawsuit against *l'Avenir*—MM. de Montalembert and Lacordaire as schoolmasters—Their trial in the *Cour des pairs*—The capture of Warsaw—Answer of four poets to a word spoken by a statesman

THE Revolution of 1830 came as a surprise to M. de Lamennais and his school in the midst of these vague and restless designs. His heart, ready to sympathise with everything that was great and generous, had already been alienated from Royalism; already the man, poet and philosopher, was kicking beneath the priestly robe. The century which had just venerated and extolled his genius, reproached him under its breath for resisting the way of progress. Intractable and headstrong by nature, with a rugged and reclusive intellect, the Abbé de Lamennais was by temperament a free lance. Then 1830 sounded. Sitting upon the ruins of that upheaval, which had just swallowed up one dynasty, and shaken the Church with the same storm and shipwreck in which that dynasty had foundered, the philosophers of La Chesnaie took counsel together; they said among themselves that the opposition against the clergy, with which Liberalism had been animated since 1815, was the result of the prominent protection which had been spread over the Catholic priests, in face of the instability of the Powers, in face of the roaring waves of the Revolution; and they began to question whether it would not be advantageous to the immutable Church to separate herself from all the tottering States. Stated thus, the question was quickly decided. The Abbé de Lamennais

thought the time had come for him to throw himself directly and personally into the struggle. The principles of a journal were settled, and he went. Two men entered that career of publicity with him: the Abbé Lacordaire and Comte Charles de Montalembert.

The Abbé Lacordaire was, at the period when I had the honour of finding myself in communication with him on religious and political principles, a young priest who had passed from the Bar at Paris to the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. After his term of probation, he had spent three harassing years in the study of theology; he left the seminary full of hazy ideas and turbulent instincts. His temper of mind was acrimonious, keen and subtle; he had dark fiery eyes, delicate and mobile features, he was pale with the pallor of the Cenobite and of a sickly complexion, with hard, gaunt, strongly marked outlines,—so much for his face. Attracted by the brilliancy of the Abbé de Lamennais, he fell in with all his political views; he, too, longed for the liberty of the spirit after due control of the flesh; the protection of the State, because of his priesthood, was burdensome to him. He put his hand in his master's and the covenant was sealed.

The Comte de Montalembert, on his side, was, at that time, quite a young man, fair, with a face like a girl's, and pink cheeks, shy and blushing; as he was short-sighted, he looked close at people through his eye-glasses. He appealed strongly to the Abbé de Lamennais, who felt drawn to him with a sort of paternal sympathy. Finally, Comte Charles de Montalembert belonged to a family whose devotion to the cause of the Elder Branch of the Bourbons was well known; but he openly declared that he placed France in his affections before a dynasty, and liberty before a crown.

Round these three men, one already famous and the others still unknown, rallied the ecclesiastics and young people of talent, who, in all simple faith, were desirous of combining the majesty of religious traditions with the nobility of revolutionary ideas. That such an alliance was impossible Time—that great tester of things and men—would prove; but the

attempt was none the less noble for all that; it ministered, moreover, to a want which was then permeating the new generations. Already Camille Desmoulins, one of those poets who are specially inspired, had exclaimed to the Revolutionary Tribunal with somewhat penetrative melancholy: "I am the same age, thirty-three years, as the *Sans-culotte* Jesus!"

The title of the new journal was *l'Avenir*. The programme of its principles was drawn up equally by them all, and it called upon the government of July for absolute liberty for all creeds and all religious communities, for liberty of the press, liberty in education, the radical separation of the Church from the State and, finally, for the abolition of the ecclesiastical budget. It was 16 October 1830, and the moment was a favourable one. Belgium was about to start her revolution, and, in that revolution, the hand of the clergy was visible; Catholic Poland was sending up under the savage treatment of the Czar one long cry of distress and yet of hope; Ireland, by the voice of O'Connell, was moving all nationalities to whom religion was the motive power and a flag of independence; Ireland shook the air with the words CHRIST and LIBERTY! *L'Avenir* made itself the monitor of the religious movement, combined with the political movement, as may be judged by these few lines which proceeded from the association, and are taken from its first number—

"We have no hidden design whatsoever, we never had; we mean exactly what we say. Hoping, therefore, to be believed in all good faith, we say to those whose ideas differ upon several points of our creed: 'Do you sincerely want religious liberty, liberty in educational matters, in civil and political affairs and liberty of the press, which, do not let us forget, is the guarantee for all types of liberty? You belong to us as we belong to you. Every kind of liberty that the people in the gradual development of their life can uphold is their due, and their progress in civilisation is to be measured by the actual, and not the fictitious, progress they make in liberty!'"

It was at this juncture that the transformation took place of the Abbé DE LA MENNAIS to the Abbé de LAMENNAIS.

His opinions and his talents and his name entered upon a new era; he was no more the stern and gloomy priest pronouncing deadly sentence on the human intellect over the tomb of Faith; but a prophet shaking the shrouds of dying nations in the name of liberty, and crying aloud to the dry bones to "Arise!"

Now, among the young editors of *l'Avenir* it is worth noticing that the most distinguished of them for talent and for the loftiness of his democratic views, was Comte Charles de Montalembert, whose imprudent impetuosity the stern old man was obliged, more than once, to check. Presently, we shall have to relate the story of the sacking of the church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and the profanation of the sacred contents. The situation was an embarrassing one for *l'Avenir*: that journal had advised the young clergy to put faith in the Revolution, and here was that self-same Revolution, breaking loose in a moment of anger, throwing mud at the Catholic temples and uprooting the insignia of religion. It was Comte Charles de Montalembert who undertook to be the leader of the morrow. Instead of inveighing against the vandals, he inveighed against the clergy and priests, whose blind and dangerous devotion to the overturned throne had drawn down the anger of the people upon the Christian creed. He had no anathemas strong enough to hurl at "those incorrigible defenders of the ancient régime, and that bastard Catholicism which gave birth to the religion of kings!" The crosses that had been knocked down were those branded with the fleurs-de-lis; he took the opportunity to urge the separation of the Church from the civil authority. Without the fleurs-de-lis, no one — the Comte Charles de Montalembert insisted emphatically—had any quarrel with the Cross.

The objective of *l'Avenir*, then, was both political and literary; it was in sympathy with modern literature, and, in the person of the Abbé de Lamennais, it possessed, besides, one of the leading writers of the day; it was one of those rare papers (*rari nantes*) in which one could follow the human mind under its two aspects. *Liber*, in Latin, may be allowed to

mean also *libre* (free) and *livre* (book). I have already told how we literary men of the new school had made implacable enemies of all the papers on the side of the political movement. It was all the more strange that the literary revolution had preceded, helped, prepared the way for and heralded the political revolution which was past, and the social revolution which was taking place. For example, we recollect an article upon *Notre Dame de Paris*, wherein, whilst regretting that the author was not more deeply Catholic, Comte Charles de Montalembert praised the style and poetry of Victor Hugo with the enthusiasm of an adept. It was about this time, and several days, I believe, after the representation of *Antony*, that M. de Lamennais expressed the desire that I should be introduced to him. This wish was a great honour for me, and I gratefully acquiesced. A mutual friend took me to the house of the famous founder of *l'Avenir*, who was then living in the rue Jacob—I remember the name of the street, but have forgotten the number of the house. Before that day, I had already joyfully acknowledged an admiration for him which sprang up in my heart and soul fresh, and strong, and unalloyed.

Meanwhile, *l'Avenir* was successful; this was soon apparent from the anger and hatred launched against its doctrines. Amongst the various advices it gave to the clergy, that of renouncing the emoluments administered by the State, and of simply following Christ in poverty, was not at all relished; and people grew indignant. It was in vain for the solemn voice of the Abbé de Lamennais to exclaim—

"Break these degrading chains! Put away these rags!"

The clergy replied under their breath: "Call them rags if you wish, but they are rags dear to our hearts."

Do my readers desire to know to what degree the journal *l'Avenir* had its roots buried in what is aristocratically styled Society? Then let us quote the first lines dedicated to the trial of *l'Avenir* in the *l'Annuaire* of Lesur—

"Never were the approaches to the Court of Assizes more largely filled with so affluent and influential a crowd, and never

certainly were so large a number of *ladies* attracted to a political trial as in the case of this. Immediately the court opened proceedings, the jurymen, defendants, barristers and the magistrate himself were overwhelmed by a multitude of persons who could not manage to find seats. M. l'Abbé de Lamennais, M. Lacordaire, the editors of *l'Avenir*, and M. Waille, the responsible manager of the paper, were placed on chairs in the centre of the bar; the two first were clad in frockcoats over their cassocks; M. Waille wore the uniform of the National Guard."

It was one of the first press trials since July. The public prosecutor's speech was very timid, and he apologised for coming, after a revolution carried out in favour of the press, to demand legal penalties against this very press. But *l'Avenir* had exceeded all limits of propriety. We will quote the incriminating phrase—

"Let us prove that we are Frenchmen by faithfully defending that which no one can snatch from us without violating the law of the land. Let us say to our sovereigns: 'We will obey you in so far as you yourselves obey that law which has made you what you are, without which you are nothing!'"

That was written by M. de Lamennais. We forget the actual phrase, although not the cause, which brought the Abbé Lacordaire to the defendants' bench. M. de Lamennais was defended by Janvier, who has since played a part in politics. Lacordaire defended himself. His speech made a great sensation, and revealed the qualities both of a lawyer and of a preacher. The jury acquitted them.

Some time later, *l'Avenir* had to submit to the ordeal of another trial in a greater arena and under circumstances which we ought to recall.

MM. de Montalembert and Lacordaire had constituted themselves the champions of liberty in educational matters, as well as of all other liberties, both religious and civil. From words they passed to deeds; and they opened, conjointly, an elementary school which a few poor children attended. The police intervened. Ordered to withdraw, the professors offered resistance, so they were obliged to arrest the "substance of

the offence"—namely, the street arabs who filled the school-room. There was hardly sufficient ground for a trial before the *tribunal correctionnel*; but, in the meantime, a few days before the promulgation of the law which suppressed the hereditary rights to the peerage, M. Charles de Montalembert's most excellent father died. The matter then assumed unexpected proportions: Charles de Montalembert, a peer of France by the grace of non-retroactivity, was not amenable to ordinary courts of justice, so the trial was carried before the Court of Peers, where it took the dimensions of a political debate upon the freedom of education. Lacordaire, whose cause could not be disconnected from that of his accomplice, was also transferred to the Supreme Court, and he delivered extempore his own counsel's speech. M. de Montalembert, on the contrary, read a speech in which he attacked the university and M. de Broglie in particular.

"At this point," says the *Moniteur*, in its report of the trial, "the honourable peer of France put up his eye-glass and looked critically at the young orator."

Less fortunate before the Court of Peers than before the jury, which would certainly have acquitted them, the two editors of *l'Avenir* lost their case; but they won it in the opinion of the country. The Comte de Montalembert owed it to this circumstance, that he sided with M. de Lamennais, whose Liberal doctrines he shared and professed at that time; he was also equally bound by the unexpected death of his father to find a career ready opened for him in the Upper Chamber. But when questioned by the Chamber as to his profession, he replied—"Schoolmaster."

All these trials seemed but to give a handle to M. de Lamennais's religious enemies. Rumours began from below. From the lower clergy, who condemned them, M. de Lamennais and the other editors of *l'Avenir* appealed to the bishops, who in their turn also condemned them. Then, driven back from one entrenchment after another, like the defenders of a town, who, having vainly defended their advanced positions, and their first and second *enceintes*, are forced to take refuge within the

citadel itself, the accused men were obliged to look towards the Vatican, and to put their trust in Rome. The mainmast of this storm-beaten vessel, M. de Lamennais, was the first to be struck by the thunders of denunciation.

On 8 September 1831, a voice rang through the world similar to that of the angel in the Apocalypse, announcing the fall of towns and empires; that voice, as incoherent as a death-rattle or last expiring sigh, formulated itself in these terrible words on 16 September: "Poland has just fallen! Warsaw is taken!" We know how this news was announced to the Chamber of Deputies by General Sébastiani. "Letters I have received from Poland," he said, in the session of 16 September, "inform me that PEACE *reigns in Warsaw*." There was a slight variation given in the *Moniteur*, which spoke of ORDER, instead of *peace*, reigning in Warsaw. Under the circumstances neither word was better than the other: both were infamous! It is curious to come across again to-day the echo which that great downfall awakened in the soul of poets and believers, those living lyres which great national misfortunes cause to vibrate, and from whom the passing breeze of calamity draws exquisite sounds. Here we have four replies to the optimistic phraseology of the Minister for Foreign Affairs—

BARTHÉLEMY

"*Destinée à périr*! . . . L'oracle avait raison!
Faut-il accuser Dieu, le sort, la trahison?
Non, tout était prévu, l'oracle était lucide! . . .
Qu'il tombe sur nos fronts, le sceau du fratricide!
Noble sœur! Varsovie! elle est morte pour nous;
Morte un fusil en main, sans fléchir les genoux;
Morte en nous maudissant à son heure dernière;
Morte en baignant de pleurs l'aigle de sa bannière,
Sans avoir entendu notre cri de pitié,
Sans un mot de la France, un adieu d'amitié!
Tout ce que l'univers, la planète des crimes,
Possédait de grandeur et de vertus sublimes;
Tout ce qui fut géant dans notre siècle étroit
A disparu! Tout dort dans le sépulcre froid! . . .
Cachons-nous! cachons-nous! nous sommes des infâmes!
Rasons nos poils, prenons la quenouille des femmes;

Jetons bas nos fusils, nos guerriers oripeaux,
Nos plumets citadins, nos ceintures de peaux;
Le courage à nos cœurs ne vient que par saccades . . .
Ne parlons plus de gloire et de nos barricades!
Que le teint de la honte embrase notre front!
Vous voulez voir venir les Russes: ils viendront! . . ."

BARBIER

"*La Guerre*

"Mère! il était une ville fameuse;
Avec le Hun j'ai franchi ses détours;
J'ai démoli son enceinte fumeuse;
Sous le boulet j'ai fait crouler ses tours!
J'ai promené mes chevaux par les rues,
Et, sous le fer de leurs rudes sabots,
J'ai labouré le corps des femmes nues,
Et des enfants couchés dans les ruisseaux! . . .
Hourra! hourra! j'ai courbé la rebelle!
J'ai largement lavé mon vieil affront:
J'ai vu des morts à hauteur de ma selle!
Hourra! j'ai mis les deux pieds sur son front! . . .
Tout est fini, maintenant, et ma lame
Pend inutile à côté de mon flanc.
Tout a passé par le fer et la flamme;
Toute muraille a sa tache de sang!
Les maigres chiens aux saillantes échines
Dans les ruisseaux n'ont plus rien à lécher;
Tout est désert; l'herbe pousse aux ruines. . . .
Ô mort! ô mort! je n'ai rien à faucher!"

"*Le Choléra-Morbus*

"Mère! il était un peuple plein de vie,
Un peuple ardent et fou de liberté;
Eh bien, soudain, des champs de Moscovie,
Je l'ai frappé de mon souffle empesté!
Mieux que la balle et les larges mitrailles,
Mieux que la flamme et l'implacable faim,
J'ai déchiré les mortelles entrailles,
J'ai souillé l'air et corrompu le pain! . . .
J'ai tout noirci de mon haleine errante;
De mon contact j'ai tout empoisonné;

Sur le teton de sa mère expirante,
Tout endormi, j'ai pris le nouveau-né !
J'ai dévoré, même au sein de la guerre,
Des camps entiers de carnage fumants ;
J'ai frappé l'homme au bruit de son tonnerre ;
J'ai fait combattre entre eux des ossements ! . . .
Partout, partout le noir corbeau becquète ;
Partout les vers ont des corps à manger ;
Pas un vivant, et partout un squelette . . .
Ô mort ! ô mort ! je n'ai rien à ronger ! "

" *La Mort*

" Le sang toujours ne peut rougir la terre ;
Les chiens toujours ne peuvent pas lécher ;
Il est un temps où la Peste et la Guerre
Ne trouvent plus de vivants à faucher ! . . .
Enfants hideux ! couchez-vous dans mon ombre,
Et sur la pierre étendez vos genoux ;
Dormez ! dormez ! sur notre globe sombre,
Tristes fléaux ! je veillerai pour vous.
Dormez ! dormez ! je prêterai l'oreille
Au moindre bruit par le vent apporté ;
Et, quand, de loin, comme un vol de corneille,
S'élèveront des cris de liberté ;
Quand j'entendrai de pâles multitudes,
Des peuples nus, des milliers de proscrits,
Jeter à bas leurs vieilles servitudes
En maudissant leurs tyrans abrutis ;
Enfants hideux ! pour finir votre somme,
Comptez sur moi, car j'ai l'œil creux . . . Jamais
Je ne m'endors, et ma bouche aime l'homme
Comme le czar aime les Polonais ! "

VICTOR HUGO

" Je hais l'oppression d'une haine profonde ;
Aussi, lorsque j'entends, dans quelque coin du monde,
Sous un ciel inclément, sous un roi meurtrier,
Un peuple qu'on égorge appeler et crier ;
Quand, par les rois chrétiens aux bourreaux turcs livrée,
La Grèce, notre mère, agonise éventrée ;
Quand l'Irlande saignante expire sur sa croix ;
Quand l'Allemagne aux fers se débat sous dix rois ;

Quand Lisbonne, jadis belle et toujours en fête,
Pend au gibet, les pieds de Miguel sur sa tête;
Quand Albani gouverne au pays de Caton;
Quand Naples mange et dort; quand, avec son bâton,
Sceptre honteux et lourd que la peur divinise,
L'Autriche casse l'aile au lion de Venise;
Quand Modène étranglé râle sous l'archiduc:
Quand Dresde lutte et pleure au lit d'un roi caduc;
Quand Madrid sa rendort d'un sommeil léthargique;
Quand Vienne tient Milan; quand le lion belgique,
Courbé comme le bœuf qui creuse un vil sillon,
N'a plus même de dents pour mordre son bâillon;
Quand un Cosaque affreux, que la rage transporte,
Viole Varsovie échevelée et morte,
Et, souillant son linceul, chaste et sacré lambeau
Se vautre sur la vierge étendue au tombeau;
Alors, oh! je maudis, dans leur cour, dans leur antre,
Ces rois dont les chevaux ont du sang jusqu'au ventre.
Je sens que le poëte est leur juge; je sens
Que la muse indignée, avec ses poings puissants,
Peut, comme au pilori, les lier sur leur trône,
Et leur faire un carcan de leur lâche couronne,
Et renvoyer ces rois, qu'on aurait pu bénir,
Marqués au front d'un vers que lira l'avenir!
Oh! la muse se doit aux peuples sans défense!
J'oublie, alors, l'armour, la famille, l'enfance.
Et les molles chansons, et le loisir serein,
Et j'ajoute à ma lyre une corde d'airain!"

LAMENNAIS

"*The Taking of Warsaw*

"Warsaw has capitulated! The heroic nation of Poland, forsaken by France and repulsed by England, has fallen in the struggle she has gloriously maintained for eight months against the Tartar hordes allied with Prussia. The Muscovite yoke is again about to oppress the people of Jagellon and of Sobieski, and, to aggravate her misfortune, the furious rage of various monsters will, perhaps, detract from the horror which the crime of this fresh onslaught ought to inspire. Let every man protect his own property; leave to the cut-throat, murder and treachery! Let the true sons of Poland protect their glory untarnished, immortal! Leave to the Czar and his allies the

curses of everyone who has a human heart, of every man who realises what constitutes a country. To our Ministers their names! There is nothing lower than this. Therefore, generous people, our brothers in faith, and at arms, whilst you were fighting for your lives, we could only aid you with our prayers; and now, when you are lying on the field of battle, all that we can give you is our tears! May they in some degree, at least, comfort you in your great sufferings! Liberty has passed over you like a fleeting shadow, a shadow that has terrified your ancient oppressors: to them it appears as a symbol of justice! After the dark days had passed, you looked heavenwards, and thought you saw more kindly signs there; you said to yourself: 'The time of deliverance approaches; this earth which covers the bones of our ancestors shall yet be our own; we will no longer heed the voice of the stranger dictating his insolent commands to us. . . . Our altars shall be as free as our fire-sides.' But you have been self-deceived; the time to live has not yet come; it was the time to die for all that was sweet and sacred to men's hearts. . . . Nation of heroes, people of our affection! rest in peace in the tombs that the crimes and cowardice of others have dug for you; but never forget that hope springs from those tombs; and a cross above them prophesies, 'Thou shalt rise again!'"

Let us admit that a nation is fortunate if it possesses poets; for were there only politicians, posterity would gather very odd notions about it.

In conclusion, the downfall of Poland included with it that of *l'Avenir*. We will explain how this was brought about in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

Suspension of *l'Avenir*—Its three principal editors present themselves at Rome—The Abbé de Lamennais as musician—The trouble it takes to obtain an audience of the Pope—The convent of Santo-Andrea della Valle—Interview of M. de Lamennais with Gregory XVI.—The statuette of Moses—The doctrines of *l'Avenir* are condemned by the Council of Cardinals—Ruin of M. de Lamennais—The *Paroles d'un Croyant*

THE position of affairs was no longer tenable for the editors of *l'Avenir*. If, on the one hand, the religious democracy, overwhelmed with sadness and bitterness, listened with affection to the words of the messengers; on the other hand, the opposition of the heads of the Catholic Church became formidable, and the accusation of heresy ran from lip to lip. The Abbé de Lamennais looked about him and, like the prophet Isaiah, could see nothing but desolation all around. Poland, wounded in her side, her hand out of her winding sheet, slept in the ever deceived expectation of help from the hand of France; and yet she had fallen full of despair and doubt, crying, "God is too high, and France too far off!" Ireland, sunk in misery and dying from starvation, ground down under the heel of England, in vain prostrated herself before its wooden crosses to implore succour from Heaven: none came to her! Liberty seemed to have turned away her face from a world utterly unworthy of her. Poland and Ireland, those two natural allies in all religious democracy, disappeared from the political scenes, dragging down with them in their fall the existence of *l'Avenir*. The wave of opposition, like an unebbing tide, still rose and ever rose. Some detested M. de Lamennais's opinions; others, his

talent; the latter were as much incensed against him as any. He was obliged to yield. Like every paper which disappears into space, *l'Avenir* had to announce *suspension* of publication; this was his farewell from Fontainebleau—

"If we withdraw for a while," wrote M. de Lamennais, "it is not on account of weariness, still less from discouragement; it is to go, as the soldiers of Israel of old, *to consult the Lord in Shiloh*. They have put our faith and our very intentions to the doubt; for what is there that people do not attack in these days? We leave the field of battle for a short time to fulfil another duty equally pressing. Traveller's stick in hand, we pursue our way to the eternal throne to prostrate ourselves at the feet of the pontiff whom Jesus Christ has established as the guide and teacher to His disciples, and we will say to him, 'O Father! condescend to look down upon these, the latest of thy children to be accused of being in rebellion against thy infallibility and gracious authority! O Father! pronounce over us the words which will give life and light, and extend thy hand over us in blessing and in acknowledgment of our obedience and love.'"

It would be puerile to question the sincerity of the author of those lines at this point. For, like Luther, who also promised his submission to Rome, the Abbé de Lamennais meant to persevere in the Catholic faith. If, later, his orthodoxy wavered; if, upon closer view of Rome and her cardinals, his faith in the Vicar of Christ and the visible representation of the Church gave way, we should rather accuse the pagan form under which the religion of Christ was presented to him, as in the case of the monk of Eisleben, when he visited the Eternal City. When I reach that period in my life, I will relate my own feelings, and will give my long conversations on the subject with Pope Gregory XVI.

The three pilgrims of *l'Avenir*, the Abbé de Lamennais, the Abbé Lacordaire and the Comte Charles de Montalembert, started, then, for Italy, not quite, as one of their number expressed it, with travellers' staffs in their hands, but animated with sincere faith and with sorrow in their hearts. They did not leave behind them the dream of eleven months without

feeling deep regret; *l'Avenir* had, in fact, lasted from 16 October 1830 to 17 September 1831. We will not relate the travelling impressions of the Abbé de Lamennais, for the author of the *Essai sur l'indifférence* was not at all the man to notice external impressions. He passed through Italy with unseeing eyes; all through that land of wonders he saw nothing beyond his own thoughts and the object of his journey. Ten years later, when prisoner at Sainte-Pélagie, and already grown quite old, Lamennais discovered a corner in his memory still warm with the Italian sunshine; by a process of photography, which explains the character of the man we are dealing with, the monuments of art and the country itself were transferred to a plate in his brain! It needed meditation, solitude and captivity, just as the silvered plate needs iodine, to bring out of his memory the image of the beautiful things he had forgotton to admire ten years previously. On this account, he writes to us in 1841, under the low ceiling of his cell—

"I begin to see Italy. . . . It is a wondrous country!"

A curious psychological study might be made of the Abbé de Lamennais, especially by comparing him with other poets of his day. The author of the *Essai sur l'indifférence* saw little and saw that but imperfectly; there was a cloud over his eyes and on his brain; the sole perception, the only sense he had of the outside world, which seemed to be always alert and awake, was that of hearing, a sense equivalent to the musical faculty: he played the piano and especially delighted in the compositions of Liszt. Hence arose, probably, his profound affection for that great artist. As regards all other outward senses of the objective world, his perceptions seem to have been within him, and when he wishes to see, it is in his own soul that he looks. To this peculiarity is owing the nature of his style, which is psychological in treatment. If he describes scenery, as in his *Paroles d'un Croyant*, or in the descriptions sent from his prison, it is always the outlines of the infinite that is drawn by his pen in vague horizons; with him it is his thoughts which visualise, not his eyes. M. de Lamennais

belongs to the race of morbid thinkers, of whom Blaise Pascal is a sample. Let not the medical faculty even attempt to cure these sensitive natures: it will be but to deprive them of their genius.

The journey, with its enforced waits for relays of horses, often afforded the Abbé de Lamennais leisure for the study of our modern school of literature, with which he was but little acquainted. In an Italian monastery, where the pilgrims received hospitality, MM. de Lamennais and Lacordaire read *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Henri III.* for the first time. When they reached Rome, the Abbé de Lamennais put up at the same hotel and suite of rooms that had been occupied a few months previously by the Comtesse Guiccioli. His one fixed idea was to see the Pope and to settle his affairs, those of religious democracy, with him direct. After long delays and a number of fruitless applications, after seven or eight requests for an audience still without result, the Abbé de Lamennais complained; then a Romish ecclesiastic, to whom he poured out his grievances, naïvely suggested that he had perhaps omitted to deposit the sum of . . . in the hands of Cardinal. . . . The Abbé de Lamennais confessed that he would have been afraid of offending His Eminence by treating him like the door-keeper of a common courtesan.

"You need no longer be surprised at not having been received by His Holiness," was the Italian abbé's reply.

The ignorant traveller had forgotten the essential formality. But, although instructed, he still persisted in trying to obtain an audience of the Pope gratis; by paying, he felt he should be truckling with simony. The editors of *l'Avenir* had remained for three months unrecognised in the Holy City, waiting until the Pope should condescend to consider a question which was keeping half Catholic Europe in suspense. The Abbé Lacordaire had decided to return to France; the Comte de Montalembert made preparations for setting out for Naples; M. de Lamennais alone remained knocking at the gates of the Vatican, which were more inexorably closed than those of Lydia in her bad days. Father Ventura, then general

of the Theatine, received the illustrious French traveller at Santo-Andrea della Valle.

"I shall never forget," says M. de Lamennais in his *Affaires de Rome*, "those peaceful days I spent in that pious household, surrounded by the most exquisite care, amongst those instructively good and religious people devoted to their duty and aloof from all intrigue. The life of the cloister—regular, calm and, as it were, set apart and self-contained—holds a kind of *via media* between the purely worldly life and that of the future, which faith reveals to us in but shadowy outlines, and of which every human being possesses within himself a positive assurance."

Finally, after many solicitations, the Abbé de Lamennais was received in private audience by Gregory XVI. He went to the Vatican, climbed the huge staircase often ascended and descended by Raphael and by Michael Angelo, by Leo X. and Julian II.; he crossed the high and silent chambers with their double rows of superposed windows; at the end of that long, splendid and desolate palace he reached, under the escort of an usher, an ante-chamber, where two cardinals, as motionless as statues, sat upon wooden seats, solemnly reading their breviary. At the appointed moment the Abbé de Lamennais was introduced. In a small room, bare, upholstered in scarlet, where a single armchair denoted that only one man had the right to sit there, a tall old man *stood* upright, calm and smiling in his white garments. He received M. de Lamennais standing, a great honour! The greatest honour which that divine man could pay to another man without violating etiquette. Then the Pope conversed with the French traveller about the lovely sunshine and the beauties of nature in Italy, of the Roman monuments, the arts and ancient history; but of the object of his journey and his own special business in coming there, not a a single word. The Pope had no commission at all for that: the question was being considered somewhere in the dark by the cardinals appointed to inquire into it, whose names were not divulged. A petition had been addressed to the Court of Rome by the editors of *l'Avenir*; and this petition must necessarily lead to some decision, but all this was shrouded in the

most impenetrable mystery. The Pope himself, however, showed affability to the French priest, whose genius was an honour to the Catholic Church.

"What work of art," he asked M. de Lamennais, "has impressed you most?"

"The *Moses* of Michael Angelo," replied the priest.

"Very well," replied Gregory XVI.; "then I will show you something which no one sees or which very few indeed, even of the specially favoured, see at Rome." Whilst saying this, the great white-haired old man entered a sort of recess enclosed by curtains, and returned holding in his arms a miniature replica in silver of the *Moses* done by Michael Angelo himself.

The Abbé de Lamennais admired it, bowed and withdrew, accompanied by the two cardinals who guarded the entrance to that chamber. He was compelled to acknowledge the gracious reception he had been accorded by the Holy Father; but, in all conscience, he had not come all the way from Paris to Rome just to see the statuette of Moses! It was a most complete disillusionment. He shook the dust of Rome off his feet, the dust of graves, and returned to Paris. After a long silence, when the affair of *l'Avenir* seemed buried in the excavations of the Holy See, Rome spoke: she condemned the doctrines of the men who had tried to reunite Christianity to Liberty.

The distress of the Abbé de Lamennais was profound. The shepherd being smitten, the sheep scattered, the news of censure had scarcely had time to reach La Chesnaie before the disciples were seized with terror and took to flight. M. de Lamennais remained alone in the old deserted château, in melancholy silence, broken only by the murmur of the great oak trees and the plaintive song of birds. Soon, even this retreat was taken from him, and he woke one day to find himself ruined by the failure of a bookseller to whom he had given his note of hand. Then the late editor of *l'Avenir* began his voyage through bitter waters; anguish of soul prevented his feeling his poverty, which was extreme; his furniture, books, all were sold. Twice he bowed his head submissively under the hand of the Head

of the Church, and twice he raised it, each time sadder than before, each time more indomitable, more convinced that the human mind, progress, reason, the conscience could not be wrong. It was not without profound heart-rendings that he separated himself from the articles of belief of his youth, from his career of priesthood and of tranquil obedience and from great and powerful harmony; in a word, from everything that he had upheld previously; but the new spirit had, in Biblical language, gripped him by the hair commanding him to "go forward!" It was then, in silence, in the midst of persecutions which even his gentleness was unable to disarm, in a small room in Paris, furnished with only a folding-bed, a table and two chairs, that the Abbé de Lamennais wrote his *Paroles d'un Croyant.* The manuscript lay for a year in the author's portfolio; placed several times in the hands of the editor Renduel, withdrawn, then given back to him to be again withdrawn, this fine book was subjected to all sorts of vicissitudes before its publication and met with all sorts of obstructions; the chief difficulties came from the abbé's own family, especially from a brother, who viewed with terror the launching forth upon the sea of democracy tossed by the storms of 1833. At last, after many delays and grievous hesitations, the author's strength of will carried the day against the entreaties of friendship; and the book appeared. It marked the third transformation of its writer: the Abbé de La Mennais and M. de Lamennais gave place to Citizen Lamennais. We shall come across him again on the benches of the Constituent Assembly of 1848. In common with all men of great genius, who have had to pilot their own original course through the religious and political storms that raged for thirty years, M. de Lamennais has been the subject of the most opposite criticisms. We do not undertake here to be either his apologist or denouncer; simply to endeavour to render him that justice which every true-hearted man owes to any man whom he admires: we have tried to show him to others as he appeared to our own eyes.

CHAPTER VII

Who Gannot was—Mapah—His first miracle—The wedding at Cana—Gannot, phrenologist—Where his first ideas on phrenology came from—The unknown woman—The change wrought in Gannot's life—How he becomes Mapah

LET us frame M. de Lamennais, the great philosopher, poet and humanitarian, between a false priest and a false god. Christ was crucified after His bloody passion between two thieves. We are now going to relate the adventures and expose the doctrines of *Mapah* or of the *being who was Gannot.* He was one of the most eccentric of the gods produced during the years 1831 to 1845. The ancients divided their gods into *dii majores* and *dii minores*; Mapah was a *minor* god. He was not any the less entertaining on that account. The name of *Mapah* was the favourite title of the god, and the one under which he wished to be worshipped; but, not forgetting that he had been a man before he became a god, he humbly and modestly permitted himself to be called, and at times even called himself, by his own personal name as, *he who was Gannot.* He had indeed, or rather he had had, two very distinct existences; that of a man and that of a god. The man was born about 1800, or, at all events, he would seem to have been nearly my own age when I knew him. He gave his age out to be then as between twenty-eight and thirty. I was told that, when he became a god, he maintained he had been contemporaneous with all the ages and even to have pre-existed, under a double symbolic form, Adam and Eve, in whom he became incarnate when the father and mother of the human race were yet one and the selfsame flesh! The man had been an elegant dandy, a fop and frequenter of the boulevard

de Gand, loving horses and adoring women, and an inveterate gambler; he was an adept at every kind of play, specially at billiards. He was as good a billiard player as was Pope Gregory XVI., and supposing the latter had staked his papacy on his skilful play against Gannot, I would assuredly have bet on Gannot. To say that Gannot played billiards better than other games does not mean that he preferred games of skill to those of chance; not at all: he had a passion for roulette, for la rouge et la blanche, for trente-et-un, for le biribi, and, in fact, for all kinds of games of chance. He was also possessed of all the happy superstitious optimism of the gambler: none knew better than he how to puff at a cigar and to creak about in varnished boots upon the asphalted pavements whilst he dreamt of marvellous fortunes, of coaches, tilburys, tandems harnessed to horses shod in silver; of mansions, hotels, palaces, with soft thick carpets like the grass in a meadow; of curtains, of imitation brocades, tapestries, figured silk, crystal lustres and Boule furniture. Unluckily, the gold he won flowed through his extravagant fingers like water. Unceasingly bandied about from misery to abundance, he passed from the goddess of hunger to that of satiety with regal airs that were a delight to witness. Debauchery was none the less pleasing to him, but it had to be debauchery on a huge scale: the feast of Trimalco or the nuptials of Gamacho. But, in other ways, he was a good friend, ever ready to lend a helping hand—throwing his money broadcast, and his heart among the women, giving his life to everybody not suspecting his future divinity, but already performing all kinds of miracles. Such was Gannot, the future Mapah, when I had the honour of making his acquaintance, about 1830 or 1831, at the café *de Paris*. Still less than he himself could I foretell his future divinity, and, if anybody had told me that, when I left him at two o'clock in the morning to return to my third storey in the rue de l'Université, I had just shaken the hand of a god, I should certainly have been very much surprised indeed.

I have said that even before he became a god, Gannot worked miracles; I will recount one which I almost saw him

do. It was somewhere about 1831—to give the precise date of the year is impossible—and a friend of Gannot, an innocent debtor who was as yet only negotiating his first bill of exchange, went to find Gannot to lay before him his distress in harrowing terms. Gannot was the type of man people always consulted in difficult crises,—his mind was quick in suggestions; he was clear-sighted and steady of hand. Unluckily, Gannot was going through one of his periods of poverty, days when he could have given points even to Job. He began, therefore, by confessing his personal inability to help, and when his friend despaired—

"Bah!" he said, "we have seen plenty of other people in as bad a plight!"

This was a favourite expression with Gannot, who had, indeed, seen all shades of life.

"All very well," said his friend; "but meantime, how am I to get out of this fix?"

"Have you anything of value you could raise money on, if it were but twenty, ten, or even five francs?"

"Alas!" said the young fellow, "there is only my watch . . ."

"Silver or gold?"

"Gold."

"Gold! What did it cost?"

"Two hundred francs; but I shall hardly get sixty for it, and the bill of exchange is for five hundred francs."

"Go and take your watch to the Mont-de-Piété."

"And then?"

"Bring back the money they give you for it here."

"Well?"

"You must give me half of it."

"After that?"

"Then I will tell you what you must do. . . . Go, and be sure you do not divert a single sou of the amount!"

"The deuce! I shall not think of doing that," said the friend. And off he ran and returned presently with seventy francs. This was a good beginning. Gannot took it and put it with a grand flourish into his pocket.

"What are you doing?" asked his friend.

"You will soon see."

"I thought you said we were to halve it . . ."

"Later . . . meanwhile it is six o'clock; let us go and have dinner."

"How are we to dine?"

"My dear fellow, decent folk must have their dinner and dine well in order to give themselves fresh ideas."

And Gannot took his way towards the Palais-Royal, accompanied by the young man. When there, he entered the Frères-Provençaux. The youth tried faintly to drag Gannot away by the arm, but the latter pinched his hand tight as in a vice and the young man was obliged to follow. Gannot chose the menu and dined valiantly, to the great uneasiness of his friend; the more dainty the dishes the more he left on his plate untasted. The future Mapah ate enough for both. The Rabelaisian quarter of an hour arrived, and the bill came to thirty-five francs. Gannot flung a couple of louis on the table. They were going to give him the change.

"Keep it—the five francs are for the waiter," he said.

The young man shook his head sadly.

"That is not the way," he muttered below his breath, "to pay my bill of exchange."

Gannot did not appear to notice either his murmurs or his headshakings. They went out, Gannot walking in front, with a toothpick in his mouth; the friend followed silently and gloomily, like some resigned victim. When they reached *la Rolonde*, Gannot sat down, drew a chair within his friend's reach, struck the marble table with the wood of the framework that held the daily paper, ordered two cups of coffee, an innfull of assorted liqueurs and the best cigars they possessed. The total amounted to five francs. There were then but twenty-five francs left over from the seventy. Gannot put ten in his friend's hand and restored the remaining fifteen to his pocket.

"What now?" asked his friend.

"Take the ten francs," replied Gannot; "go upstairs to that

house you see opposite, No. 113; be careful not to mistake the storey, whatever you do!"

"What is the house?"

"It is a gambling-house."

"I shall have to play, then?"

"Of course you must! And at midnight, whatever your gains or losses, bring them here. I shall be there."

The young man had by this time reached such a pitch of utter exhaustion that, if Gannot had told him to go and fling himself into the river, he would have gone. He carried out Gannot's instructions to the letter. He had never put foot in a gaming-house before; fortune, it is said, favours the innocent beginner: he played and won. At a quarter to twelve—for he had not forgotten the injunctions of the master for whom he began to feel a sort of superstitious reverence—he went away with his pockets full of gold and his heart bursting with joy. Gannot was walking up and down the passage which led to the Perron, quietly smoking his cigar. From the farthest distance when he first caught sight of him, the youth shouted—

"Oh! my friend, such good luck! I have won fifteen hundred francs; when my bill of exchange is paid I shall still have a thousand francs! . . . Let me embrace you; I owe you my very life."

Gannot gently checked him with his hand, and told him to moderate his transports of gratitude.

"Ah! now," he said, "we can indeed go and have a glass of punch, can we not?"

"A glass of punch? A bowl, my friend, two bowls! As much as ever you like, and havanas *ad libitum!* I am rich; when my bill of exchange is paid, my watch redeemed, I shall still have . . ."

"You have told me all that before."

"Upon my word, I am so pleased I cannot repeat it often enough, dear friend!" And the young man gave himself up to shouts of immoderate joy, whilst Gannot regally climbed the stairs which led to the Hollandais, the only one left open after midnight. It was full. Gannot called for the *waiters.*

One waiter appeared. "I asked for *the waiters*," said Gannot. He fetched three who were in the ice-house and they roused up two who had already gone to bed—fifteen came in all. Gannot counted them.

"Good!" he said. "Now, waiters, go from table to table and ask the gentlemen and ladies at them what they would like to take."

"Then, monsieur . . ."

"I will pay for it!" Gannot replied, in lordly tones.

The joke was acceded to and was, indeed, thought to be in very good taste; only the friend laughed at the wrong side of his mouth as he watched the consumption of liqueurs, coffee and glorias. Every table was like a liquid volcano, with lava of punch flowing out of the middle of its flames. The tables filled up again and the new arrivals were invited by the amphitryon to choose whatever they liked from the carte; ices, liqueurs, syphons of lemonade, everything, even to soda-water. Finally, at three o'clock, when there was not a single glass of brandy left in the establishment, Gannot called for the bill. It came to eighteen hundred francs. What about the bill of exchange now? . . . The young man, feeling more dead than alive, mechanically put his hand into his pocket, although he knew very well that it did not contain more than fifteen hundred francs; but Gannot opened his pocket-book and pulled out two notes of a thousand francs, and blowing them apart—

"Here, waiters," he said, "the change is for your attendance."

And, turning to his pupil, who was quite faint by this time, and who had been nudging his arm the whole night or treading on his toes—

"Young man," he said to him, "I wanted to give you a little lesson. . . . To teach you that a true gambler ought not to be astonished at his winnings, and, above all, he should make bold use of them." With the fifteen francs he had kept of his friend's money, he, too, had played, and had won two thousand francs. We have seen how they were spent. This was his miracle of the marriage of Cana.

But, as may well be understood, this hazardous fortune-making had its cruel reverses; Gannot's life was full of crises; he always lived at extremes of excitement. More than once during this stormy existence the darkest thoughts crossed his mind. To become another Karl Moor or Jean Sbogar or Jaromir, he formed all kinds of dreadful plans. To attack travellers by the highway and to fling on to the green baize tables gold pieces stained with blood, was, during more than one fit of despair, the dream of feverish nights and the terrible hope of his morrows!

"I went stumbling," he said, after his divinity had freed him from all such gloomy human chimeras, "along the road of crime, knocking my head here and there against the guillotine's edge; I had to go through all these experiences; for from the lowest blackguard was to emerge the first of reformers!"

To the career of gambling he added another, less risky. Upon the boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, where he then lived, the passers-by might observe a head as signpost. Upon its bald head some artist had painted in blue and red the cerebral topography of the *talents*, *feelings* and *instincts*; this cabalistic head indicated that consultations on phrenology were given within. Now, it is worth while to tell how Gannot attained the zenith of the science of Gall and of Spurzheim. He was the son of a hatter, and, when a child, had noticed in his father's shop the many different shapes of the hands corresponding to the diverse shapes of people's heads. He had thereupon originated a system of phrenology of his own, which, later, he developed by a superficial study of anatomy. Gannot was a doctor, or, more correctly speaking, a sanitary inspector; what he had learnt occupied little room in his memory, but, gifted as he was with fine and discerning tact, he analysed, by means of a species of *clairvoyance*, the characters and heads with which he had to deal. One day, when overwhelmed by a loss of money at the gaming-table and seeing only destitution and despair ahead of him, he had given way to dark resolutions, a fashionable and beautiful young woman of wealth got down from her carriage, ascended his stairs and knocked at his

door. She came to ask the soothsayer to tell her fortune by her head. Though a splendid creature, Gannot saw neither her, nor her beauty, nor her troubles and wavering blushes; she sat down, took off her hat, uncovered her lovely golden hair, and let her head be examined by the phrenologist. The mysterious doctor passed his hands carelessly through the golden waves. His mind was elsewhere. There was nothing, however, more promising than the surfaces and contours which his skilful hand discovered as he touched them. But, when he came to the spot at the base of the skull which is commonly called the nape, which savants call the organ of *amativity*, whether she had seen Gannot previously or whether from instantaneous and magnetic sympathy, the lady burst into tears and flung her arms round the future Mapah's neck, exclaiming—

"Oh! I love you!"

This was quite a new light in the life of this man. Until that time Gannot had known women; he had not known woman. His life of mad debauchery, of gambling, violent emotions, spent on the pavements of the boulevards, and in the bars of houses of ill-fame, and among the walks of the *bois*, was followed by one of retirement and love; for he loved this beautiful unknown woman to distraction and almost to madness. She was married. Often, after their hours of delirious ecstacy, when the moment of parting had to come, when tears filled their eyes and sobs their breasts, they plotted together the death of the man who was the obstacle to their intoxicating passion; but they got no further to the completion of crime than thinking of it. She wished at least to fly with him; but, on the very day they had arranged to take flight, she arrived at Gannot's house with a pocket-book full of bank notes stolen from her husband. Gannot was horrified with the theft and declined the money. Next day she returned with no other fortune than the clothes she wore, not even a chain of gold round her neck or a ring on her finger. And then he took her away. Complicated by this fresh element in his life, he took his flight into more impossible regions than ever before; his was the type of nature which is carried away by all kinds of

impulses. If the principle M. Guizot lays down be true: "Bodies always fall on the side towards which they incline," the Mapah was bound to fall some day or other, for he inclined to many sides! Gambling and love admirably suited the instincts of that eccentric life; but gambling-houses were closed! And the woman he loved died! Then was it that the god was born in him from inconsolable love and the suppressed passion for play. He was seized by illness, during which the spirit of this dead woman visited him every night, and revealed to him the doctrines of his new religion. Haunted by the hallucinations of love and fever, Gannot listened to himself in the voice which spoke within him. But he was no longer Gannot, he was transfigured.

CHAPTER VIII

The god and his sanctuary—He informs the Pope of his overthrow—His manifestoes—His portrait—Doctrine of escape—Symbols of that religion—Chaudesaigues takes me to the Mapah—Iswara and Pracriti—Questions which are wanting in actuality—War between the votaries of *bidja* and the followers of *sakti*—My last interview with the Mapah

IN 1840, in the old Ile Saint Louis which is lashed by bitter and angry winds from the north and west, upon the coldest quay of that frigid Thule—*terrarum ultima Thule*—on a dark and dingy ground-floor, in a bare room, a man was moulding and casting in plaster. That man was the one-time Gannot. The room served both as studio and school; pupils came and took lessons in modelling there and to consult the *Mapah*. This was the name, as we have already said, under which Gannot went in his new existence. From this room was sent the first manifesto in which *he who had been Gannot* proclaimed his mission to the world. Who was surprised by it? Pope Gregory XVI. certainly was, when he received, on his sovereign throne, a letter dated *from our apostolic pallet-bed*, which announced that his time was over; that, from henceforth, he was to look upon himself as dethroned, and, in fact, that he was superseded by another. This polite duty fulfilled with regard to his predecessor, Gannot, in all simplicity, announced to his friends that they must look upon him as the god of the future. Gannot had been the leader of a certain school of thought for two or three years past; amongst his followers were Felix Pyat, Thoré, Chaudesaigues, etc. etc. His sudden transformation from Gannot to Mapah, his declaration to the Pope, and his presumption in posing as a revealer, alienated his former disciples; it was the *durus hic sermo*. Nevertheless, he main-

tained unshaken belief in himself and continued his sermons; but as these oral sermons were insufficient and he thought it necessary to add to them a printed profession of faith, one day he sold his wearing apparel and converted the price of it into manifestoes of war against the religion of Christ, which he distributed among his new disciples.

After the sale of his wardrobe, the habits of the ci-devant lion entirely disappeared, as his garments had done. In his transition from Gannot to Mapah, everything that constituted the former man vanished: a blouse replaced, for both summer and winter, the elegant clothes which the past gambler used to wear; a grey felt hat covered his high and finely-shaped forehead. But, seen thus, he was really beautiful: his blue-grey eyes sparkled with mystic fire; his finely chiselled nose, with its delicately defined outlines, was straight and pure in form; his long flowing beard, bright gold coloured, fell to his chest; all his features, as is usual with thinkers and visionaries, were drawn up towards the top of his head by a sort of nervous tension; his hands were white and fine and distinguished-looking, and, with a remnant of his past vanity as a man of the world, he took particular care of them; his gestures were not by any means without commanding power; his language was eloquent, impassioned, picturesque and original. The prophet of poverty, he had adopted its symbols; he became a proletarian in order to reach the hearts of the lower classes; he donned the working-man's blouse to convert the wearers of blouses. The Mapah was not a simple god—he was a composite one; he was made up of Saint Simon, of Fourier and of Owen. His chief dogma was the extremely ancient one of Androgynism, *i.e.* the unity of the male and female principle throughout all nature, and the unity of the man and the woman in society. He called his religion Evadisme, *i.e.* (Eve and Adam); himself he called Mapah, from *mater* and *pater*; and herein he excelled the Pope, who had never even in the palmiest days of the papacy, not even under Gregory VII., been anything more than the father of Christians, whilst he was both father and mother of humanity. In his system people had not to take simply

the name of their father, but the first syllable of their mother's name combined with the first syllable of that of their father. Once the Mapah addressed himself thus to his friend Chaudesaigues—

"What is your name?"

"Chaudesaigues."

"What does that come from?"

"It is my father's name."

"Have you then killed your mother, wretched man?"

Chaudesaigues lowered his head: he had no answer to give to that.

In Socialism Mapah's doctrine was that of dissent. According to him assassins, thieves and smugglers were the living condemnation of the moral order against which they were rebelling. Schiller's *Brigands* he looked upon as the most complete development of his theory to be found in the world. Once he went to a home for lost women and collected them together, as he had once collected the waiters of the Hollandais in the days of his worldly folly; then, addressing the poor creatures who were waiting with curiosity, wondering who this sultan could be who wanted a dozen or more wives at a time—

"Mesdemoiselles," he said, "do you know what you are?"

"Why, we are prostitutes," the girls all replied together.

"You are wrong," said the Mapah; "you are Protestants." And in words which were not without elevation and vividness, he expounded to them the manner in which they, poor girls, protested against the privileges of respectable women. It need hardly be said that, as this doctrine spread, it led to some disquietude in the minds of magistrates, who had not attained the heights of the new religion, but were still plunged in the darkness of Christianity. Two or three times they brought the Mapah before the examining magistrates and threatened him with a trial; but the Mapah merely shook his blouse with his fine nervous hand, as the Roman ambassador used to shake his toga.

"Imprison me, try me, condemn me," he said; "I shall not appeal from the lower to a higher tribunal; I shall appeal from Pilate to the People!"

And, in fact, whether they stood in awe of his beard, his blouse or his speech, which was certainly captivating; whether they were unable to arrive at a decision as to what court the new religion should be judged at—police court or Court of Assizes—they left the Mapah in peace.

The most enthusiastic of the Evadian apostles was *he who was once Caillaux*, who published the *Arche de la nouvelle alliance*. He was the Mapah's Saint John; the *Arche de la nouvelle alliance* was the gospel which told the passion of Humanity to whose rescue the Christ of the Ile Saint Louis was come. We will devote a chapter to that gospel. The Mapah himself wrote nothing, except two or three manifestoes issued from his *apostolic pallet*, in which he announced his apostolate to the modern world; he did nothing but pictures and plaster-casts that looked like originals dug out of a temple of Isis. Taking his *religion* back to its source, he showed by his *two-fold symbolism*, how it had developed from age to age, fertilising the whole of nature, till, finally, it culminated in himself. The whole of the history was written in hieroglyphic signs, had the advantage of being able to be read and expounded by everybody and treated of Buddhism, Paganism and Christianity before leading up to Evadism. In the latter years of the reign of Louis-Philippe, the Mapah sent his allegorical pictures and symbols in plaster to the members of the Chamber of Deputies and to the Royal Family; it will be readily believed that the members of the Chamber and royal personages left these lithographs and symbols in the hands of their ushers and lackeys, with which to decorate their own attics. The Mapah trembled for their fate.

"They scoff," he said in prophecy: "MANÉ, THÉCEL, PHARÈS; evil fortune will befall them!"

What did happen to them we know.

One day Chaudesaigues—poor honest fellow, who died long before his time, which I shall speak of in its place—proposed

to take me to the Mapah, and I accepted. He recognised me, as he had once dined or taken supper with me in the days when he was Gannot; and he had preserved a very clear memory of that meeting; he was very anxious at once to acquaint me with his symbolic figures, and to initiate me, like the Egyptian proselytes, into his most secret mysteries. Now, I had, by chance, just been studying in earnest the subjects of the early ages of the world and its great wars, which apparently devastated those primitive times without seeming reason; I was, therefore, in a measure, perfectly able not only to understand the most obscure traditions of the religion of the Mapah, but also to explain them to others, which I will now endeavour to do here.

At the period when the Celts had conquered India, that ancestor of Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations, they found a complete system of physical and metaphysical sciences already established; Atlantic cosmogony related to absolute unity, and, according to it, everything emanated from one single principle, called *Iswara*, which was purely spiritual. But soon the Indian savants perceived with fear, that this world, which they had looked upon for long as the product of absolute *unity*, was incontestably that of a combined *duality*. They might have looked upon these two principles, as did the first Zoroaster a long time after them, as *principiés—i.e.* as the son and daughter of Iswara, thus leaving the ancient Iswara his old position, by supporting him on a double column of creating beings, as we see a Roman general being carried raised up on two shields by his soldiers; but they wished to divide these two principles into *principiant* principles; they therefore satisfied themselves by joining a fresh principle to that of Iswara, by mating Iswara with *Pracriti*, or nature. This explained everything. Pracriti possessed the *sakti—i.e.* the conceptive power, and the old Iswara was the *bidja* or generative power.

I think, up to now, I have been as clear as possible, and I mean to try to continue my explanations with equal lucidity; which will not be an easy matter seeing that (and I am happy

to give my reader due warning of it) we are dealing only with pure science, of which fact he might not be aware.

This early discovery of the Indian savants, which resulted in the marriage of Iswara with Pracriti, led to the consideration of the universe as the product of two principles, each possessing its own peculiar function of the male and female qualities. Iswara and Pracriti stood for Adam and Eve to the whole of the universe, not simply for humanity. This system, remarkable by its very simplicity, which attracted men by giving to all that surrounded him an origin similar to his own, is to be found amongst most races, which received it from the Hindus. Sanchoniathon calls his male principle *Hypsistos*, the Most High, and his female principle *Berouth*, nature; the Greeks call this male principle *Saturn*, and their female principle *Rhea*; both one and the other correspond to Iswara and Pracriti. All went well for several centuries; but the mania for controversy is innate in man, and it led to the following questions, which the Hindu savants propounded, and which provoked the struggle of half the human race against the other.

"Since," say the controversials, "the universe is the result of two *principiant* powers, one acting with male, the other with female qualities, must we then consider the relations that they bear to one another? Are they independent one of the other? are they pre-existent to matter and contemporaneous with eternity? Or ought we rather to look upon one of them as the procreative cause of its companion? If they are independent, how came they to be reunited? Was it by some coercive force? If so, what divinity of greater power than themselves exercised that pressure upon them? Was it by sympathy? Why, then, did it not act either earlier or later? If they are not independent of one another, which of the two is to be under subjection to the other? Which is first in order of antiquity or of power? Did Iswara produce Pracriti or Pracriti Iswara? Which of them acts with the greatest energy and is the most necessary to the procreation of inanimate things and animate beings? Which should be called first in the sacrifices made to them or in the hymns addressed to

them? Ought the worship offered them to be combined or separated? Ought men and women to raise separate altars to them or one for both together?"[1]

These questions, which have divided the minds of millions of men, which have caused rivers of blood to flow, nowadays sound idle and even absurd to our readers, who hear Hindu religion spoken of as mere mythology, and India as some far-off planet; but, at the time of which we are now speaking, the Indian Empire was the centre of the civilised world and master of the known world. These questions, then, were of the highest importance. They circulated quietly in the empire at first, but soon each one collected quite a large enough number of partisans for the religious question to appear under a political aspect. The supreme priesthood, which at first had begun by holding itself aloof from all controversy, sacrificed equally to Iswara and to Pracriti—to the *generative* power and to the *conceptive power*: sacerdotalism, which had long remained neutral between the *bidja* and the *sakti* principles, was compelled to decide, and as it was composed of men—that is to say of the *generative power*, it decided in favour of *males*, and proclaimed the dominance of the masculine sex over the feminine. This decision was, of course, looked upon as tyrannical by the Pracritists, that is, the followers of the *conceptive power* theory; they revolted. Government rose to suppress the revolution and, hence, the declaration of civil war. Figure to yourselves upon an immense scale, in an empire of several hundreds of millions of men, a war similar to that of the Albigenses, the Vaudois or the Protestants. Meantime two princes of the reigning dynasty,[2] both sons of King Ongra, the oldest called Tarak'hya, the youngest Irshou, divided the Indian Empire between them, less from personal conviction than to make proselytes. One took *bija* for his standard, the other took *sakti*. The followers of each of these two symbols rallied at the same time under their leaders, and India had a political and civil and religious war; Irshou, the

[1] The Abbé d'Olivet, *État social de l'homme*.

[2] See the *Scanda-Pousana* and the *Brahmanda* for the details of this war.

younger of the two brothers, having positively declared that he had broken with sacerdotalism and intended to worship the feminine or conceptive faculty, as the first cause in the universe, according priority to it and pre-eminence over the generative or masculine faculty. A political war can be ended by a division of territory; a religious war is never-ending. Sects exterminate one another and yet are not convinced. A deadly, bitter, relentless war, then, ravaged the empire. As Irshou represented popular opinion and the Socialism of the time, and his army was largely composed of herdsmen, they called his followers the *pallis*, that is to say, shepherds, from the Celtic word *pal*, which means shepherd's crook. Irshou was defeated by Tarak'hya, and driven back as far as Egypt. The Pallis there became the stock from which those primitive dynasties sprang which lasted for two hundred and sixty-one years, and are known as the dynasties of Shepherd Kings. The etymology this time is palpably evident; therefore, let us hope we shall not meet with any contradiction on this head. Now, we have stated that Irshou took as his standard the symbol which represented the divinity he had worshipped; that sign, in Sanscrit, was called *yoni*, from whence is derived *yoneh*—which means a dove—this explains, we may point out in passing, why the dove became the bird of Venus. The men who wore the badge of the yoni were called Yoniens, and, as they always wore it symbolically depicted on a red flag, red or purple became, at Tyre and Sidon and in Greece, the royal colour, and was adopted by the consuls and emperors and popes of Rome and, finally, by all reigning princes, no matter what race they were descended from or what religion they professed. My readers may assume that I am rather pleased to be able to teach kings the derivation of their purple robes.

Well, then, it was on account of his studying these great questions of dispute, which had lasted more than two thousand years and had cost a million of men's lives; it was from fear lest they should be revived in our days that the philanthropic Gannot endeavoured to found a religion, under the title of Evadism which was to reunite these two creeds into a single one. To

that end were his strange figures moulded in plaster and the eccentric lithographs that he designed and executed upon coloured paper, with the earnestness of a Brahmin disciple of *bidja* or an Egyptian adherent of *sakti*.[1]

The joy of the Mapah can be imagined when he found I was acquainted with the primitive dogmas of his religion and with the disasters which the discussion of those doctrines had brought with them. He offered me the position of his chief disciple, on the spot, in place of *him who had once been Caillaux*; but I have ever been averse to usurpation, and had no intention of devoting myself to a principle, by my example, which, some day or other, I should be called upon to oppose. The Mapah next offered to abdicate in my favour and himself be my head disciple. The position did not seem to me sufficiently clearly defined, in the face of both spiritual and temporal powers, to accept that offer, fascinating though it was. I therefore contented myself with carrying away from the Mapah's studio one of the most beautiful specimens of the *bidja* and *sakti*, promising to exhibit them in the most conspicuous place in my sitting-room, which I took good care not to do, and then I departed. I did not see the Mapah again until after the Revolution of 24 February, when, by chance, I met him in the offices of the *Commune de Paris*, where I went to ask for the insertion of an article on exiles in general, and those of the family of Orléans in particular. The article had been declined by the chief editor of the *Liberté*, M. Lepoitevin-Saint-Alme. The revolution predicted by Gannot had come. I expected, therefore, to find him overwhelmed with delight; and, as a matter of fact, he did praise the three days of February, but with a faint voice and dulled feelings; he seemed to be singularly enfeebled by that strange and sensual mysticism, which presented every event to his mind in dogmatic form. The lines of the upper part of his face were more deeply drawn towards his prominent forehead, and his whole person bespoke the visionary in whom the hallucination of being a god had degenerated into a dis-

[1] In Sanscrit *linga* and *yoni*; in Greek φαλλος and χολρος.

ease. He defined the terror of the middle classes at the events of 24 February and Socialistic doctrines as, "the frantic terror of the pig which feels the cold edge of the knife at its throat." His latter years were sad and gloomy; he ended by doubting himself. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!* rang in his aching and disillusioned heart like a death-knell. During the last year of his life his only pupil was an Auvergnat, a seller of chestnuts in a passage-way. . . . And to him the dying god bequeathed the charge of spreading his doctrines. This event took place towards the beginning of the year 1851.

CHAPTER IX

Apocalypse of the being who was once called Caillaux

WE said a few words of the apostle of Mapah and promised to follow him to his isle of Patmos and to give some idea of his apocalypse. We will keep our word. It was no easy matter to find this apocalypse, my reader may judge; it had been published at the trouble and expense of Hetzel, under the title of *Arche de la nouvelle Alliance.* Not that Hetzel was in the very least a follower of the Evadian religion—he was simply the compatriot and friend of *him who was Caillaux*, to which twofold advantages he owed the honour of dining several times with the god Mapah and his disciple. It is more than likely that Hetzel paid for the dinners himself.

ARCHE DE LA NOUVELLE ALLIANCE

"I have not come to say to the people, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's,' but I have come to tell Cæsar to render to God the things that belong to God! 'What is God?—God, is the People!—The *Mapah.*' At the hour when shadows deepen I saw the vision of the last apostle of a decaying religion and I exclaimed—

I

"'Why dost thou grieve, O king! and why dost thou moan over thy ruined crown? Why rise up against those who dethroned thee? If thou fallest to-day, it is because thy hour has come: to attempt to prolong it for a day, is but to offer insult to the Majesty in the heavens.

II

"'Everything that exists here below has it not its phases of life and of death? Does the vegetation of the valleys always flourish? After the season of fine days does it not come to pass that some morning the autumn wind scatters the leaves of the beeches?

III

"'Cease, then, O King! thy lamentation and do not be perturbed in thy loneliness! Be not surprised if thy road is deserted and if the nations keep silence during thy passing as at the passing of a funeral cortège: thou hast not failed in thy mission; simply, thy mission is done. It is destiny!

IV

"'Dost thou not know that humanity only lives in the future? What does the present care about the oriflamme of Bouvines? Let us bury it with thy ancestors lying motionless beneath their monuments; another banner is needed for the men of to-day.

V

"'And when we have sealed with a triple seal the stone which covers up past majesty, let us do obeisance as did the people of Memphis before the silence of their pyramids, those mute giants of the desert; but like them do not let us remain with our foreheads in the dust, but from the ruins of ancient creeds let us spring upwards towards the Infinite! Thus did I sing during the dawn of my life. A poet, I have ever pitied noble misfortune; as son of the people, I have never abjured renown. At that time this world appeared to me to be free and powerful under heaven, and I believed that the last salute of the universe to the phantom of ancient days would be its first aspiration towards future splendours. But it was nothing of the kind. The past, whilst burying itself under the earth, had not drawn all its procession of dark shades with it. Now I went to those bare strands which the ocean bleaches with its foam. The seagulls hailed the rocks of the coast with their harsh cries, and the mighty voice of the sea sounded more sweetly to my ear than the language of men. . . .'"

Then follows the apostle's feelings under the influence of the

great aspects of Nature; he stays a year far from Paris; then at last his vocation recalls him among men.

"Now, the very night of my return from my wanderings, I walked a dreamer in the midst of the roar of that great western city, my soul more than ever crushed beneath the weight of its ruin. I beheld myself as during my happiest years when I was full of confidence in God and the future; and then I turned my glance upon myself, the man of the present moment, for ever tossed between hope and fear, between desire and remorse, between calm and discouragement. When I had well contemplated myself thus, and had by thought stirred up the mud of the past and had considered the good and evil that had emanated from me, I raised in inexpressible anger my fist towards heaven, and I said to God: 'To whom, then, does this earth belong?' At the same moment, I felt myself hustled violently, and by an irresistible movement I lowered my arm to strike—in striking the cheek of him who was jostling me, I felt I was smiting the world. Oh! what a surprise! my hand, instead of beating his face, encountered his hand; a loving pressure drew us together, and in grave and solemn tones he said: 'The water, the air, the earth and fire belong to none—they are God's!' Then, uncovering the folds of the garment which covered my breast, he put a finger on my heart and a brilliant flame leapt out and I felt relief. Overcome with amazement, I exclaimed—

"'Who art thou, whose word strengthens and whose touch regenerates?'

"'Thou shalt know, this very night!' he replied, and went on his way.

"I followed and examined him at leisure: he was a man of the people, with a crooked back and powerful limbs; an untrimmed beard fell over his breast, and his bare and nearly bald head bore witness to hard work and rude passions. He carried a sack of plaster on his back which bowed him down beneath its weight. Thus bent he passed through the crowd. . . ."

The disciple then followed the god; for this man who had comforted him was the Mapah; he followed him to the threshold of his studio, into which he disappeared. It was the same studio to which Chaudesaigues had taken me, on the

quai Bourbon, in the Ile Saint Louis. The door of the studio soon reopened and the apostle entered and was present at the revelation, which the Mapah had promised him. But, first of all, there was the discovery of the Mapah himself.

"Meanwhile, the owner of this dwelling had none of the bearing of a common working-man. He was, indeed, the man of the sack of plaster, and the uncut beard, and torn blouse, who had accosted me in such an unexpected fashion; he had exactly the same powerful glance, the same breadth of shoulders, the same vigorous loins, but on that furrowed brow, and in those granite features and that indescribable personality of the man there hovered a rude dignity before which I bowed my head.

"I advanced towards my host, who was laid on a half-broken bed, lighted up by a night lamp in a pot of earth. I said—

"'Master, you whose touch heals and whose words restore, who are you?'

"Lifting his eyes to me, he replied simply, 'There is no master now; we are all children of God: call me brother.'

"'Then,' I replied, 'Brother, who then are you?'

"'I am *he who is*. Like the shepherd on the tops of the cliffs I have heard the cry of the multitude; it is like the moan of the waves at the winter equinox; that cry has pierced my heart and I have come.'

"Motioning me to come nearer, he went on—

"'Son of doubt, who art sowing sorrow and reaping anguish, what seekest thou? The sun or darkness? Death or life? Hope or the grave?'

"'Brother, I seek after truth,' I replied. 'I have hailed the past, I have questioned its abysmal depths whence came the rumours that had reached me: the past was deaf to my cries.'

"'The past was not to hear you. Every age has had its own prophets, and each country its monuments; but prophets and monuments have vanished like shadows: what was life yesterday is to-day but death. Do not then evoke the past, let it fall asleep in the darkness of its tombs in the dust of its solitary places.'

"I went on—'I questioned the present amidst the flashes and deceptions of this century, but it did not hear me either.'

"'The present was not to hear you; its flashes do but precede the storm, and its law is not the law of the future.'

"'Brother, what then is this law? What are the showers that make it blossom, and what sun sheds light upon it?'

"'God will teach thee.'

"Pointing to me to be seated near to him, he added: 'Sit down and listen attentively, for I will declare the truth unto you. I am he who crieth to the people, "Watch at the threshold of your dwelling and sleep not: the hour of revelation is at hand . . ."'

"At that moment the earth trembled, a hurricane beat against the window panes, belfries rang of themselves; the disciple would fain flee, but fear riveted him to the master's side. He continued—

"I foreboded that something strange would take place before me, and indeed as the knell of the belfry rang out on the empty air, a song which had no echo in mortal tongue, abrupt, quick and laden with indefinable mockery, answered him from under the earth, and rising from note to note, from the deepest to the shrillest tones, it resounded and rebounded like some wounded snake, and grated like a saw being sharpened; finally, ever decreasing, ever growing feebler, until it was lost at last in space. And this is the burden of the song—

"'Behold the year '40, the famous year '40 has come! Ah! ah! ah! What will it bring forth? What will it produce? An ox or an egg? Perhaps one, perhaps the other! ah! ah! ah! Peasants turn up your sleeves! And you wealthy, sweep your hearthstones. Make way, make way for the year '40! The year '40 is cold and hungry and in need of food; and no wonder! Its teeth chatter, its limbs shiver, its children have no shoes, and its daughters possess not even a ribbon to adorn their locks on Sunday; they have not even a beggarly dime lying idle in their poverty-stricken pockets to buy drink wherewith to refresh themselves and their lovers! Ah! ah! what wretchedness! Were it not too dreadful it would seem ludicrous. Did you come here, gossip, to see this topsy-turvy world? Come quickly, there is room for all. . . . Stay, yon raven looking in at the window, and that vulture beating its wings. Ah! ah! ah! The year '40 is cold, is an hungered, in need of food! What will it bring forth . . .?'

"And the song died away in the distance, and mingled with the murmur of the wind which was wailing without. . . .

"Then began the apparitions. There were twelve of them, all livid and weighted with chains and bleeding, each holding its dissevered head in its hand, each wrapped in a shroud, green with the moss of its sepulchre, each carrying in front of it the

mark of the twelve great passions, the mystic link which unites man to the Creator. They advanced as some dark shadow of night falls upon the mountains. It was one of those terrifying groups, which one sees in the days of torment, in the midst of the cross-roads of the seething city; the citizens question one another by signs, and ask each other—

"'Do you see those awful faces down there? Who on earth are those men, and how come they to wander spectre-like among the excited crowd?'

"And on the head of the one who walked first, like that of an over-thrown king, so splendid was its pallor and its regal lips scornful, a crown of fire was burning with this word written in letters of blood, '*Lacenairisme!*' Dumb and led by the figure who seemed to be their king, the phantoms grouped themselves in a semi-circle at the foot of the dilapidated bed, as though at the foot of some seat of justice; and *he who is*, after fixing his earnest glance upon them for some moments questioned them in the following terms—

"'Who are you?'

"'Sorrow's elect, apostles of hunger.'

"'Your names?'

"'A mysterious letter.'

"'Whence come you?'

"'From the shades.'

"'What do you demand?'

"'Justice.'

"The echoes repeated, 'Justice!'

"And at a signal from their king, the phantoms intoned a ringing hymn in chorus . . ."

It had a kind of awful majesty in it, a sort of grand terror, but we will reserve our space for other quotations which we prefer to that. The apostle resumed—

"The pale phantoms ceased, their lips became motionless and frozen, and round the accursed brows of these lost children of the grave, there seemed to hover indistinctly the bloody shadow of the past. Suddenly from the base to the top of this mysterious ladder issued a loud sound, and fresh faces appeared on the threshold. . . . A red shirt, a coarse woollen cap, a poor pair of linen trousers soiled with sweat and powder; at the feet was a brass cannon-ball, in its hands were clanking chains; these accoutrements stood for the symbols of all kinds

of human misfortunes. As if they had been called up by their predecessors, they entered and bowed amicably to them. I noticed that each face bore a look of unconcern and of defiance, each carefully hid a rusty dagger beneath its vestments, and on their shoulders they bore triumphantly a large chopping-block still dyed with dark stains of blood. And on this block leant a man with a drunken face and tottering legs, grotesquely supporting himself on the worn-out handle of an axe. And this man, gambolling and gesticulating, mumbled in a nasal tone, a kind of lament with this refrain—

"'Voici l'autel et le bedeau!
A sa barbe faisons l'orgie;
Jusqu'à ce que sur notre vie,
Le diable tire le rideau,
Foin de l'autel et du bedeau!'

"And his companions took up the refrain in chorus to the noise of their clashing chains. Which perceiving *he who is* spread his hands over the dreadful pageant. There took place a profound silence; then he said—

"'My heart, ocean of life, of grief and of love, is the great receptacle of the new alliance into which fall its tears and sweat and blood; and by the tears which have watered, by the sweat which has dropped, by the blood which has become fertile, be blessed, my brothers, executed persons, convicts and sufferers, and hope—the hour of revelation is at hand!'

"'What!' I exclaimed in horror; 'hast thou come to preach the sword?'

"'I do not come to preach it but to give the word for it.'

"And *he who is* replied—

"'Passions are like the twelve great tables of the law of laws, Love. They are when in unison the source of all good things; when subverted they are the source of all evils.'

"Silence again arose, and he added—

"'Each head that falls is one letter of a verb whose meaning is not yet understood, but whose first word stands for protestation; the last, signifies integral passional expansion. The axe is a steel; the head of the executed, a flint; the blood which spurts from it, the spark; and society a powder-horn!'

"Silence was renewed, and he went on a third time—

"'The prison is to modern society what the circus was to ancient Rome: the slave died for individual liberty; in our day, the convict dies for passional integral liberty.'

"And again silence reigned, but after a while a mild Voice from on high said to the sorry cortège which stood motionless at one corner of the pallet-bed—

"'Have hope, ye poor martyrs! Hope! for the hour approaches!'"

"Then three noble figures came forward—those of the mechanic, the labourer and the soldier. The first was hungry: they fought with him for the bread he had earned. The second was both hungry and cold; they haggled for the corn he had sown and the wood he had cut down. The third had experienced every kind of human suffering; furthermore, he had hoped and his hope had withered away, and he was reproached for the blood that had been shed. All three bore the history of their lives on their countenances; all felt ill at ease in the present and were ready to question God concerning His doings; but as the hour approached and their cry was about to rise to the Eternal, a spectre rose up from the limbs of the past: his name was *Duty*. Before him they recoiled affrighted. A priest went before them, his form wrapped in burial clothes; he advanced slowly with lowered eyes. Strange contrast! He dreamed of the heavens and yet bent low towards the earth! On his breast was the inscription: *Christianity*! Beneath: *Resignation*.

"'Here they come! Behold them!' cried the apostle; they are advancing to *him who is*. What will be the nature of their speech and how will they express themselves in his presence? Will their complaint be as great as their sadness? Not so, their uncertainty is too great for them to dare to formulate their thoughts: besides, doubt is their real feeling. Perhaps, some day, they may speak out more freely. Let us listen respectfully to the hymn that falls from their lips; it is solemnly majestic, but less musical than the breeze and less infinite than the Ocean. Hear it—

HYMNE

"Du haut de l'horizon, du milieu des nuages
Où l'astre voyageur apparut aux trois rois,
Des profondeurs du temple où veillent tes images,
O Christ! entends-tu notre voix?
Si tu contemples la misère
De la foule muette au pied de tes autels,
Une larme de sang doit mouiller ta paupière.
Tu dois te demander, dans ta douleur austère,
S'il est des dogmes éternels!"

LE PRÊTRE

"O Christ! j'ai pris longtemps pour un port salutaire
Ta maison, dont le toit domine les hauts lieux;
Et j'ai voulu cacher au fond du sanctuaire,
Comme sous un bandeau, mon front tumultueux."

LE SOLDAT

"O Christ! j'ai pris longtemps pour une noble chaîne
L'abrutissant lien que je traîne aujourd'hui;
Et j'ai donné mon sang à la cause incertaine
De cette égalité dont l'aurore avait lui."

LE LABOUREUR

"O Christ! j'ai pris longtemps pour une tâche sainte
La rude mission confiée à mes bras,
Et j'ai, pendant vingt ans, sans repos et sans plainte,
Laissé sur les sillons la trace de mes pas."

L'OUVRIER

"O Christ! j'ai pris longtemps pour œuvre méritoire
Mes longs jours consumés dans un labeur sans fin;
Et, maintes fois, de peur d'outrager ta mémoire,
J'ai plié ma nature aux douleurs de la faim."

LE PRÊTRE

"La foi n'a pas rempli mon âme inassouvie!"

LE SOLDAT

"L'orage a balayé tout le sang répandu!"

LE LABOUREUR

"Où je semais le grain, j'ai récolté l'ortie!"

L'OUVRIER

"Hier, J'avais un lit mon maître l'a vendu!"

"Silence! Has the night wind borne away their prayer on its wings? or have their voices ceased to question the heavens? Are they perchance comforted? Who can tell? God keeps the enigma in His own mighty hands, the terrible enigma held aloft over the borders of two worlds—the present and the future. But they will not be forsaken on their way

where doubt assails them, where resignation fells them. Children of God, they shall have their share of life and of sunshine. God loves those who seek after Him. . . . Then the priest and soldier and artizan and labourer gave place to others, and the apostle went on—

"And after two women, one of whom was dazzlingly and boldly adorned, and the other mute and veiled, there followed a procession in which the grotesque was mingled with the terrible, the fantastic with the real; all moved about the room together, which seemed suddenly to grow larger to make space for this multitude, whilst the retiring spectres, giving place to the newcomers, grouped themselves silently at a little distance from their formidable predecessors. And *he who is*, preparing to address a speech to the fresh arrivals, one of their number, whom I had not at first noticed, came forward to answer in the name of his acolytes. Upon the brow of this interpreter, square built, with shining and greedy lips and on his glistening hungry lips, I read in letters of gold the word *Macairisme*!

"And *he who is* said—

"'Who are you?'

"'The favourites of luxury, the apostles of joy.'

"'Whence come you?'

"'From wealth.'

"'Where do you go?'

"'To pleasure.'

"'What has made you so well favoured?'

"'Infamy.'

"'What makes you so happy?'

"'Impunity.'"

The strange procession which then unfolded itself before the apostle's eyes can be imagined: first the dazzling woman in the bold attire, the prostitute; the mute, veiled woman was the adulteress; then came stock-jobbers, sharpers, business men, bankers, usurers,—all that class of worms, reptiles and serpents which are spawned in the filth of society.

"One twirled a great gold snuff-box between his fingers, upon the lid of which were engraved these words: *Powdered plebeian patience*; and he rammed it into his nostrils with avidity. Another was wrapped in the folds of a great cloak

which bore this inscription: *Cloth cut from the backs of fools.* A third, with a narrow forehead, yellow skin and hollow cheeks, was leaning lovingly upon his abdomen, which was nothing less than an iron safe, his two hands, the fingers of which were so many great leeches, twisting and opening their gaping tentacles, as though begging for food. Several of the figures had noses like the beaks of vultures, between their round and wild eyes: noses which cut up with disgusting voracity a quarter of carrion held at arm's length by a chain of massive gold, resembling those which shine on the breasts of the grand dignitaries of various orders of chivalry. In the middle of all was one who shone forth in brilliant pontifical robes, with a mitre on his head shaped like a globe, sparkling with emeralds and rubies. He held a crozier in one hand upon which he leant, and a sword in the other, which seemed at a distance to throw out flames; but on nearer approach the creaking of bones was heard beneath the vestments, and the figure turned out to be only a skeleton painted, and the sword and the crozier were but of fragile glass and rotten wood. Finally, above this seething, deformed indescribable assembly, there floated a sombre banner, a gigantic oriflamme, a fantastic labarum, the immense folds of which were being raised by a pestilential whistling wind; and on this banner, which slowly and silently unfurled like the wings of a vulture, could be read, *Providential Pillories.* And the whole company talked and sang, laughed and wept, gesticulated and danced and performed innumerable artifices. It was bewildering! It was fearful!"

Here followed the description of a kind of revel beside which *Faust's* was altogether lacking in imagination. But, when he thought they had all talked, sung, laughed, wept, gesticulated and danced long enough, *he who is* made a sign and all those voices melted into but two voices, and all the figures into but two, and all the heads into but two. And two human forms appeared side by side, looking down at their feet, which were of clay. Then, suddenly, out of the clay came forth a seven-headed hydra and each of its heads bore a name. The first was called Pride; the second, Avarice; the third, Luxury; the fourth, Envy; the fifth, Gluttony; the sixth, Anger; the seventh, Idleness. And, standing up to its full height, this frightful

hydra, with its thousand folds, strangled the writhing limbs of the colossus, which struggled and howled and uttered curses and lamentations towards the heavens: each of the seven jaws of the monster impressed horrible bites in his flesh, one in his forehead, another in his heart, another in his belly, another in his mouth, another in his flanks and another in his arms.

"'Behold the past!' said *he who is*.

"'Brother,' I cried, 'and what shall then the future be like?'

"'Look,' he said. The hydra had disappeared and the two human forms were defined again, intertwined, full of strength and majesty and love against the light background of the hovel, and the feet of the colossus were changed into marble of the most dazzling whiteness. When I had well contemplated this celestial form, *he who is* again held out his hands and it vanished, and the studio became as it was a few moments previously. The three great orders of our visitors were still there, but calm now and in holy contemplation. Then *he who is* said—

"'Whoever you may be, from whatever region you come, from sadness or pleasure, from a splendid east or the dull west, you are welcome brothers, and to all I wish good days, good years! To the murdered and convicts, brothers! innocent protestors, gladiators of the circus, living thermometers of the falsity of social institutions, Hope! the hour of your restoration is at hand! . . . And you poor prostitutes, my sisters! beautiful diamonds, bespattered with mud and opprobrium, Hope! the hour of your transformation is approaching! . . . To you, adulteresses, my sisters, who weep and lament in your domestic prison, fair Christs of love with tarnished brows, Hope! the hour of liberty is near! . . . To you, poor artisans, my brothers, who sweat for the master who devours you, who eat the scraps of bread he allows you, when he does leave you any, in agony and torments for the morrow! What ought you to become? Everything! What are you now? Nothing! Hope and listen: Oppression is impious; resignation is blasphemy! . . . To you, poor labouring men and farmers, brothers, who toil for the landlord, sow and reap the corn for the landlord of which he leaves you only the bran, Hope! the time for bread whiter than snow is coming! . . . To you, poor soldiers, my brothers, who fertilise the great furrow of humanity with your blood,

Hope! the hour for eternal peace is at hand! . . . And you, poor priests, my brothers, who lament beneath your frieze robes and beat your foreheads at the sides of your altars! Hope! the hour of toleration is at hand!'

"After a moment's silence, *he who is* went on—

"'I will not forget you, either, you the happy ones of the century, those elected for joy. You, too, have your mission to fulfil; it is a holy one, for from the glutted body of the old world will issue the transformed universe of the future. . . . Be welcome, then, brothers; good wishes to you all!'

"Then all those who were present, who had listened to him, departed from the garret in silence, filled with hope; and their footsteps echoed on the steps of the interminably long staircase. And the same cry which had already rung in my ears resounded a second time—'The year '40 is cold, it is hungry! The year '40 needs food! What will it bring forth? What will it produce? Ah! ah! ah!'

"I turned to *him who is*. The night had not run a third of its course, and the flame of the lamp still burnt in its yellow fount, and I exclaimed—

"'Brother! in whose name wilt thou relieve all these miseries?'

"'In the name of my mother, the great mother who was crucified!' replied *he who is*.

"He continued: 'At the beginning all was well and all women were like the one single woman, *Eve*, and all men like one single man, *Adam*, and the reign of *Eve and Adam*, or of primitive unity, flourished in Eden, and harmony and love were the sole laws of this world.'

"He went on: 'Fifty years ago appeared a woman who was more beautiful than all others—her name was *Liberty*, and she took flesh in a people—that people called itself *France*. On her brow, as in ancient Eden, spread a tree with green boughs which was called the *tree of liberty*. Henceforward France and Liberty stand for the same thing, one single identical idea!' And, giving me a harp which hung above his bed, he added. 'Sing, prophet!' and the Spirit of God inspired me with these words—

I

"Why dost thou rise with the Sun, O France! O Liberty! And why are thy vestments scented with incense? Why dost thou ascend the mountains in early morn?

II

"Is it to see reapers in the ripened cornfields, or the gleaner bending over the furrows like a shrub bowed down by the winds?

III

"Or is it to listen to the song of the lark or the murmur of the river, or to gaze at the dawn which is as beautiful as a blue-eyed maiden?

IV

"If you rise with the sun, O France! O Liberty! it is not to watch the reapers in the cornfields or the bowed gleaners among the furrows.

V

"Nor to listen to the song of the lark or murmur of the river, nor yet to gaze at the dawn, beauteous as a blue-eyed maiden.

VI

"Thou awaitest thy bridegroom to be: thy bridegroom of the strong hands, with lips more roseate than corals from the Spanish seas, and forehead more polished than Pharo's marble.

VII

"Come down from thy mountains, O France! O Liberty! Thou wilt not find thy bridegroom there. Thou wilt meet him in the holy city, in the midst of the multitude.

VIII

"Behold him as he comes to thee, with proud steps, his breast covered with a breastplate of brass; thou shalt slip the nuptial ring on his finger; at thy feet is a crown that has fallen in the mud; thou shalt place it on his brow and proclaim him emperor. Thus adorned thou shalt gaze on him proudly and address him thus—

IX

"'My bridegroom thou art as beauteous as the first of men. Take off the Phrygian cap from my brow, and replace it by a helmet with waving plumes; gird my loins with a flaming sword and send me out among the nations until I shall have accomplished in sorrow the mystery of love, according as it has been written, that I am to crush the serpent's head!'

X

"And when thy bridegroom has listened to thee, he will reply: 'Thy will be done, O France! O Liberty!' And he will urge thee forth, well armed, among the nations, that God's word may be accomplished.

XI

"Why is thy brow so pale, O France! O Liberty! And why is thy white tunic soiled with sweat and blood? Why walkest thou painfully like a woman in travail?

XII

"Because thy bridegroom gives thee no relaxation from thy task, and thy travail is at hand.

XIII

"Dost thou hear the wind roaring in the distance, and the mighty voice of the flood as it groans in its granite prison? Dost thou hear the moaning of the waves and the cry of the night-birds? All announce that deliverance is at hand.

XIV

"As in the days of thy departure, O France, O Liberty! put on thy glorious raiment; sprinkle on thy locks the purest perfumes of Araby; empty with thy disciples the farewell goblet, and take thy way to thy Calvary, where the deliverance of the world must be sealed.

XV

"'What is the name of that hill thou climbest amidst the lightning flashes?'

"'The hill is Waterloo.'

"'What is that plain called all red with thy blood?'

"'It is the plain of the Belle-Alliance!'

"'Be thou for ever blessed among women, among all the nations, O France! O Liberty!'

"And when *he who is* had listened to these things, he replied—

"'Oh, my mother, thou who told me "Death was not the tomb; but the cradle of an ampler life, of more infinite Love!" thy cry has reached me. O mother! by the anguish of thy painful travail, by the sufferings of thy martyrdom in crushing the serpent's head and saving Humanity!'

"Then turning to me he added: 'Child of God, what art thou looking for? Light or darkness? Death or life? Hope or despair?'

"'Brother,' I replied, 'I am looking for Truth!'

"And he replied, 'In the name of primeval unity, reconstructed by the grand blood of France, I hail thee apostle of *Eve-Adam*!'

"And *he who is* called forth to the abyss which opened out at his voice—

"'Child of God,' he said, 'listen attentively, and look!'

"And I looked and saw a great vessel, with a huge mast which terminated in a mere hull, and one of the sides of the vessel looked west and the other east. And on the west it rested upon the cloudy tops of three mountains whose bases were plunged in a raging sea. Each of these mountains bore its name on its blood-red flank: the first was called Golgotha; the second, Mont-Saint-Jean; the third, Saint-Helena. In the middle of the great mast, on the western side, a five-armed cross was fixed, upon which a woman was stretched, dying. Over her head was this inscription—

"France
18 *June* 1815
Good Friday

"Each of the five arms of the cross on which she was stretched represented one of the five parts of the world; her head rested over Europe and a cloud surrounded her. But on the side of the vessel which looked towards the east there were no shadows; and the keel stayed at the threshold of the city of God, on the summit of a triumphal arch which the sun lit up with its rays. And the same woman reappeared, but she was transfigured and radiant; she lifted up the stone of a grave on which was written—

"Restoration, Days of the Tomb
29 *July* 1830
Easter

"And her bridegroom held out his arms, smiling, and together they sprang upwards to the skies. Then, from the depths of the arched heavens, a mighty voice spake—

"'The mystery of love is accomplished—all are called! all are chosen! all are re-instated!' Behold this is what I saw in the holy heavens and soon after the abyss was veiled, and *he who is* laid his hands upon me and said—

"'Go, my brother, take off thy festal garments and don the tunic of a working-man; hang the hammer of a worker at thy waist, for he who does not go with the people does not side with me, and he who does not take his share of labour is the enemy of God. Go, and be a faithful disciple of unity!'

"And I replied: 'It is the faith in which I desire to live, which I am ready to seal with my blood? When I was ready to set forth, the sun began to climb above the horizon.

"*He who was* CAILLAUX

"*July* 1840"

Such was the apocalypse of the chief, and we might almost say, the only apostle of the Mapah. I began with the intention of cutting out three-quarters of it, and I have given nearly the whole. I began, my pen inclined to scoff, but my courage has failed me; for there is beneath it all a true devotion and poetry and nobility of thought. What became of the man who wrote these lines? I do not know in the least; but I have no doubt he did not desert *the faith in which he desired to live, and that he remained ready to seal it with his blood.* . . . Society must be in a bad state and sadly out of joint and disorganised for men of such intelligence to find no other method of employment than to become self-constituted gods—or apostles!

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

The scapegoat of power—Legitimist hopes—The expiatory mass—The Abbé Olivier—The Curé of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois—Pachel—Where I begin to be wrong—General Jacqueminot—Pillage of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois—The sham Jesuit and the Préfet of Police—The Abbé Paravey's room

WHILST we were upon the subject of great priests, of apostles and gods, of the Abbé Châtel, and of *him who was Caillaux* and the Mapah, we meant to approach cursorily the history of Saint-Simon and of his two disciples Enfantin and Bayard; but we begin to fear that our readers have had enough of this modern Olympus; we therefore hasten to return to politics, which were going from bad to worse, and to literature, which was growing better and better. Let us, however, assure our readers they have lost nothing by the delay: a little further on they will meet with the god again at his office of the Mont-de-Piété, and the apostles in their retreat of Mérilmontant.

But first let us return to our artillerymen; then, by way of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and the archbishop's palace, we will reach *Antony*. As will be realised, our misdeeds of the months of November and December had roused the attention of those in authority; warrants had been issued, and nineteen citizens, mostly belonging to the artillery, had been arrested. These were Trélat, Godefroy Cavaignac, Guinard, Sambuc, Francfort, Audry, Penard, Rouhier, Chaparre, Guilley, Chauvin, Peschieux d'Herbinville, Lebastard, Alexandre Garnier, Charles Garnier,

Danton, Lenoble, Pointis and Gourdin. They had been in all the riots of the reign of Louis-Philippe, as also in those of the end of the Consulate and the beginning of the Empire: no matter what party had stirred up the rising, it was always the Republicans who were dropped upon. And this because every reactionary government, in succession for the past seventy years, thoroughly understood that Republicans were its only serious, actual and unceasing enemies. The preference King Louis-Philippe showed us, at the risk of being accused of partiality, strongly encouraged the other parties and, notably, the Carlist party. Royalists from within and Royalist from without seemed to send one another this famous programme of 1792: "*Make a stir and we will come in! Come in, and we will make a stir!*" It was the Royalists inside who were the first to make a stir and upon the following occasion: The idea had stayed in the minds of various persons that King Louis-Philippe had only accepted his power to give it at some time to Henri v. Now, that which, in particular, lent colour to the idea that Louis-Philippe was inclined to play the part of monk, was the report that the only ambassador the Emperor Nicholas would accept was this very M. de Mortemart, to whom the Duc d'Orléans had handed, on 31 July, this famous letter of which I have given a copy; and, as M. de Mortemart had just started for St. Petersburg with the rank of ambassador, there was no further doubt, at least, in the eyes of the Royalists that the king of the barricades was ready to hand over the crown to Henri v. This rumour was less absurd, it must be granted, than that which was spread abroad from 1799 to 1803, namely, that Bonaparte had caused 18 Brumaire for the benefit of Louis xviii. Each of the two sovereigns replied with arguments characteristic of themselves. Bonaparte had the Duc d'Enghien arrested, tried and shot. Louis-Philippe allowed the pillage of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and of the archbishop's palace. An opportunity was to be given to the Carlists and priests, their natural allies, to test the situation which eight months of Philippist reign and three of Republican prosecutions had wrought among them. They were nearing

14 February, the anniversary of the assassination of the Duc de Berry. Already in the provinces there had been small Legitimist attempts. At Rodez, the tree of liberty was torn down during the night; at Collioure, they had hoisted the white flag; at Nimes, les Verdets seemed to have come to life again, and, like the phantoms that return from the other world to smite their enemies, they had, it was reported, beaten the National Guard, who had been discovered, almost overwhelmed and unable to give any but a very vague description of their destroyers. That was the situation on 12 February. The triple emanation of the Republican, Carlist and Napoleonic phases went through the atmosphere like a sudden gust of storm, bearing on its wings the harsh cries of some unbridled, frenzied carnival, when, all at once, people learnt that, in a couple of days' time, an anniversary service was to be celebrated at Saint-Roch, in expiation of the assassination at the Place Louvois. A political assassination is such a detestable thing in the opinion of all factions, that it ought always to be allowable to offer expiatory masses for the assassinated; but there are times of feverish excitement when the most simple actions assume the huge proportions of a threat or contempt, and this particular mass, on account of the peculiar circumstances at the time, was both a threat and an act of defiance. But they were deceived as to the place where it was to be held. Saint-Roch, as far as I can recollect, was, at that period, served by the Abbé Olivier, a fine, spiritual-minded priest, adored by his flock, who are scarcely consoled at the present day by seeing him made Bishop of Évreux. I knew the Abbé Olivier; he was fond of me and I hope he still likes me; I reverenced him and shall always reverence him. I mention this, in passing, to give him news of one of his penitents, in the extremely improbable case of these Memoirs ever falling into his hands. Moreover, I shall have to refer to him later, more than once. He was deeply devoted to the queen; more than anyone else he could appreciate the benevolence, piety and even humility of that worthy princess: for he was her confessor. I do not know whether it was on account of the royal intimacy with which the

Abbé Olivier was honoured, or because he understood the significance of the act that was expected of him, that the Church of Saint-Roch declined the honour. It was different with the curé of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. He accepted. This appealed to him as a twofold duty: the curé of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois was nearly eighty years of age, and he was the priest who had accompanied Marie-Antoinette to the scaffold. His curate, M. Paravey, by a strange coincidence, was the priest who had blessed the tombs of the Louvre.

In consequence of the change which had been made in the programme, men, placed on the steps of the Church of Saint-Roch, distributed, on the morning of the 14th, notices announcing that the funeral ceremony had been arranged to take place at Saint-Roch and not at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.

I was at the Vaudeville, where I believe we were rehearsing *La Famille improvisée* by Henry Monnier—I have already spoken of, and shall often again refer to, this old friend of mine, an eminent artiste, witty comrade and *good fellow*! as the English say—when Pachel the head hired-applauder ran in terrified, crying out that emblazoned equipages were forming in line at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois; and people were saying in the crowd that the personages who were getting out from them had come to be present at a requiem service for the repose of the soul of the Duc de Berry. This news produced an absolutely contrary effect upon Arago and myself: it exasperated Arago, but put me very much at ease.

I have related how I was educated by a priest, and by an excellent one too; now that early education, the influence of those juvenile memories, gave—I will not say to all my actions—God forbid I should represent myself to my readers as a habitually religious-minded man!—but to all my beliefs and opinions—such a deep religious tinge that I cannot even now enter a church without taking holy water, or pass in front of a crucifix without making the sign of the cross. Therefore, in spite of the violence of my political opinions at that time, I thought that the poor assassinated Duc de Berry had a right

to a requiem mass, that the Royalists had a right to be present at it and the curé the right to celebrate it. But this was not Étienne's way of looking at it. Perhaps he was right. Consequently, he wrote a few lines to the *National* and to the *Temps* and ran to the spot. I followed him in a much more tranquil manner. I could see that something serious would come of it; that the Royalist journals would exclaim against the sacrilege, and that the accusation would fall upon the Republican party. Arago, with his convinced opinions, his southern fieriness of temperament, entered the church just as a young man was hanging a portrait of the Duc de Bordeaux on the catafalque. Here was where Arago began to be in the right and I to be in the wrong. Behind the young man there came a lady, who placed a crown of immortelles upon it; behind the woman came soldiers, who hung their crosses to the effigy of Henri VI. by the aid of pins. Now, Arago was wholly in the right and I totally wrong. For the ceremony here ceased to be a religious demonstration and became a political act of provocation. The people and citizens rushed into the church. The citizens became incensed, and the people grumbled. But let us keep exactly to the events which followed. The riot at the archbishop's palace was middle class, not lower class. The men who raised it were the same as those who had caused the Raucourt and Philippe riots under the Restoration; the subscriptors of Voltaire-Touquet, the buyers of snuff-boxes à la Charte. Arago perceived the moment was the right one and that the irritation and grumbling could be turned to account. There was no organisation in the nature of conspiracy at that time; but the Republican party was on the watch and ready to turn any contingencies to account. We shall see the truth of this illustrated in connection with the burial of Lamarque. Arago sprang out of the church, climbed up on a horizontal bar of the railings and, stretching out his hands in the direction of the graves of July, which lay in front of the portal of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, shouted—"Citizens! They dare to celebrate a requiem service in honour of one of the members of the family whom we have just driven from power, only fifty

yards from the victims of July! Shall we allow them to finish the service?"

Maddened cries went up. "No! no! no!" from every voice; and they rushed into the church. The assailants encountered General Jacqueminot in the doorway, who was then chief of the staff or second in command of the National Guard (I do not know further particulars, and the matter is not important enough for me to inquire into). He tried to stem the torrent, but it was too strong to be stopped by a single man. The general realised this, and tried to stay it by a word. Now, a word, if it is the right one, and courageous or sympathetic, is the safest wall that can be put across the path of that fifth element which we call "The People."

"My friends," cried the general, "listen to me and take in who I am—I was at Rambouillet: therefore, I belong to your party."

"You were at Rambouillet?" a voice questioned.

"Yes."

"Well, you would have done better to stay in Paris, and to leave the combatants of July where they were: their absence would not then have been taken advantage of to set up a king!"

The riposte was a deadly one, and General Jacqueminot looked upon himself as a dead man and made no further signs of life. The invasion of the church was rapid, irresistible and terrible; in a few minutes the catafalque was destroyed, the pall was torn to shreds and the altar knocked down; the golden-flowered hanging, sacred pictures, sacerdotal vestments were all trampled under foot! Scepticism revenged itself by impiety, sacrilege and blasphemy, for the fifteen years during which it had been made to hide its mocking face behind the mask of hypocrisy. They laughed, they howled, they danced round all the sacred things they had heaped up, overturned and torn in pieces. One of the rioters came out of the sacristy in the complete dress of a priest: he mounted on the top of a heap of débris and beat time to the infernal din. It looked like a figure of Satan, dressed up ironically in priestly robes, presiding over a revel.

I witnessed the whole scene from the entrance and went away, with bent head and a heavy heart and unquiet mind, sorry I had seen it. I could not hide from myself that the people had been incited to do what they had done. I was too much of a philosopher to expect the people to discriminate between the Church and the priesthood—religion from its ministers; but I was too religious at heart to stay there, and I attempted to get away from the place. I say *I attempted*, for it was no easy thing to get out: the square of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois was crowded; and the crowd, forced back into the narrow rue de Prêtres, overflowed on to the quays. At one spot this crowd was excited and turbulent; and a struggle was going on from whence issued cries. A tall, pale young man, with long black hair and good-looking countenance, was standing on a post, watching the tumult with some expression of scorn. One of the bystanders, who was probably irritated by this disdain, began to shout: "A Jesuit!" Such a cry at such a time was like putting a match to a bundle of tow. The crowd rushed for the poor fellow, crying—

"Throw the Jesuits into the Seine! Drown him! Give the Jesuits to the nets of Saint-Cloud!"

Baude was the Préfet of Police. I can see him now with his fine locks flying in the wind, his dark eyes darting out lightning flashes, and his herculean strength. It was the second time I had seen him thus. He had just arrived with the Municipal Guard, which he had drawn up before the church door; the men were trying to shut the gates. He flew to the rescue of the unlucky doomed man, who was being passed from hand to hand, and was in his aërial flight approaching the river with fearful rapidity. The desire to hinder a murder redoubled Baude's strength. He reached the edge of the river at the same time as the victim who was threatened with being flung over the parapet. He clutched hold of him and drew him back. I saw no more: for I was being suffocated against the boards which, at that time, enclosed the *jardin de l'Infante* and, dilapidated though they were, they offered a great deal more resistance than I liked.

The necessity for labouring for my personal preservation compelled me to turn my eyes away from the direction of the quay and to struggle on my own account. My stalwart build and the combined efforts of many who recognised me enabled me to reach the quay and, from thence, the *pont des Arts*. They were still fighting by the parapet. Later, I learnt that Baude had succeeded in saving the poor devil at the expense of a good number of bruises and his coat torn to ribbons. But, whilst the Préfet of Police was playing the part of philanthropist, he was not fulfilling his duties as préfet, and the rioters profited by this lapse in his municipal functions. The people continued pillaging the church and the presbytery of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, and by the time that Baude had done his good action it was all over. Only the room of the Abbé Paravey, who had blessed the tombs of the July martyrs, had been respected. The mob always recognises, even in its moments of greatest anger and its worst sacrilege, the something that is greater than its wrath, before which it stops and bends the knee. On 24 February 1848 the mob served the Tuileries as they had served the Church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois on 14 February 1831, but it stopped short at the apartment of the Duchesse d'Orléans, as it had done before the Abbé Paravey's room.

CHAPTER II

The Préfet of Police at the Palais-Royal—The function of fire—Valérius, the truss-maker—Demolition of the archbishop's palace—The Chinese album—François Arago—The spectators of the riot—The erasure of the fleurs-de-lis—I give in my resignation a second time—MM. Chambolle and Casimir Périer

THE supposed Jesuit saved, the Church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois sacked, the room of the Abbé Paravey respected, the crowd passed away, Baude thought the anger of the lion was appeased and presented himself at the Palais-Royal without taking time to change his clothes. Just as these bore material traces of the struggle he had gone through, so his face kept the impression of the emotions he had experienced. To put it in common parlance—as the least academic of men sometimes allows himself to be captivated by the fascination of phrase-making — the préfet's clothes were torn and his face was very pale. But the king, on the other hand, was quite calm.

More fully informed, this time, of the events going on in the street, than he had been about those of the Chamber when they discharged La Fayette, he knew everything that had just happened. He saw, too, that it tended to his own advantage. The Carlists had lifted up their heads and, without the slightest interference on his part, they had been punished! There had been a riot, but it had not threatened the Palais-Royal, and by a little exercise of skill it could be made to do credit to the Republican party. What a chance! and just at the time when the leaders of that same party were in prison for another disturbance.

But the king clearly suspected that matters would not stop

here; so, with his usual astuteness, and seeming courtesy, he kept Baude to dinner. Baude saw nothing in this invitation beyond an act of politeness, and a kind of reward for the dangers he had incurred. But there was more in it than that. The Préfet of Police being at the Palais-Royal meant that all the police reports would be sent there; now, Baude could not do otherwise than to communicate them to his illustrious host. So, in this way, without any trouble to himself, the king would become acquainted with everything, both what Baude's police knew and what his own police also knew. King Louis-Philippe was a subtle man, but his very cleverness detracted from his strength. We do not think it is possible to be both fox and lion at the same time. The reports were disquieting: one of them announced the pillage of the archbishop's palace for the morrow; another, an attempted attack upon the Palais-Royal.

"Sire," asked the Prefét of the Police, "what must we do?"

"Powder and shot," replied the king.

Baude understood. By three o'clock in the morning all the troops of the garrison were disposed round the Palais-Royal, but the avenues to the archbishop's palace were left perfectly free. This is what happened while the Préfet of Police was dining with His Majesty. General Jacqueminot had summoned the National Guard and, instead of dispersing the rioters, they clapped their hands at the riot. Cadet-Gassicourt, who was mayor of the fourth arrondissement, arrived next. Some people pointed out to him the three fleurs-de-lis which adorned the highest points of the cross that surmounted the church. A man out of the crowd heard the remark, and quickly the cry went up of "Down with the fleurs-de-lis; down with the cross!" They attached themselves to the cross with the fleurs-de-lis of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, just as seventeen years previously they had attached themselves to the statue of Napoleon on the Place Vendôme. The cross fell at the third pull. There was not much else left to do after that, either inside the church or on the top of it, and, unless they pulled it down altogether, it was only wasting time to stop there. At that instant a rumour circulated, either rightly or falsely, that a surgical

instrument maker in the rue de Coq, named Valérius, had been one of the arrangers of the fête. They rushed to his shop, scattered his bandages and broke his shop-front. The National Guard came, and can you guess what it did? It made a guard-house of the wrecked shop. This affair of the cross and the fleurs-de-lis gave a political character to the riot, and had suggested, or was about to suggest, on the following day, a party of the popular insurgents towards the Palais-Royal. As a matter of fact, the fleurs-de-lis had remained upon the arms of the king up to this time. Soon after the election of 9 August, Casimir Périer had advised him to abandon them; but the king remembered that, on the male side, he was the grandson of Henry IV., and of Louis XIV. on the female line, and he had obstinately refused. Under the pretext, therefore, of demanding the abolition of the fleurs-de-lis, a gathering of Republicans was to march next day upon the Palais-Royal. When there, if they found themselves strong enough, they would, at the same stroke, demand the abolition of royalty. I knew nothing about this plot, and, if I had, I should have kept clear of everything that meant a direct attack against King Louis-Philippe. I had work to do the next day and kept my door fast shut against everybody, my own servant included, but the latter violated his orders and entered. It was evident that something extraordinary had happened for Joseph to take such a liberty with me. They had been firing off rifles half the night, they had disarmed two or three posts, they had sacked the archbishop's palace. The proposition of marching on the palace of M. de Quélen was received with enthusiasm. He was one of those worldly prelates who pass for being rather shepherds, than pastors. It was affirmed that on 28 July 1830 a woman's cap had been found at his house and they wanted to know if, by chance, there might not be a pair. The devil tempted me: I dressed hastily and I ran in the direction of the city. The bridges were crowded to breaking point, and there was a row of curious gazers on the parapets two deep. Only on the Pont Neuf could I manage to see daylight between two

spectators. The river drifted with furniture, books, chasubles, cassocks and priests' robes. The latter objects were horrible as they looked like drowning people. All these things came from the archbishop's palace. When the crowd reached the palace, the door seemed too narrow, relatively speaking, for the number and impetuosity of the visitors: the crowd, therefore, seized hold of the iron grill, shook it and tore it down; then they spread over all the rooms and threw the furniture out of the windows. Several book-lovers who tried to save rare books and precious editions were nearly thrown into the Seine. One single album alone escaped the general destruction. The man who laid hands on it chanced to open it: it was a Chinese album painted on leaves of rice. The Chinese are very fanciful in their compositions, and this particular one so far transcended the limits of French fancy, that the crowd had not the courage to insist on the precious album being thrown into the water. I have never seen anything approaching this album except in the private museum at Naples; I ought, also, to say that the album of the Archbishop of Paris far excelled that of His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies. The most indulgent people thought that this curious document had been given to the archbishop by some repentant Magdalene, in expiation of the sins she had committed, and to whom the merciful prelate had given absolution. It goes without saying that I was among the tolerant, and that, then as now, I did my utmost to get this view accepted.

Meantime, after seizing the furniture, library hangings, carpets, mirrors, missals, chasubles and cassocks, the crowd, not satisfied, seized upon the building itself. In an instant a hundred men were scattered over the roofs and had begun to tear off the tiles and slates of the archiepiscopal palace. It might have been supposed the rioters were all slaters. Has my reader happened, at any time, to shut up a mouse or rat or bird in a box pierced with holes, put it in the midst of an ant-hill and waited, given patience, for two or three hours? At the end of that time the ants have finished their work, and he can extract a beautiful skeleton from which all the flesh has

completely disappeared. Thus, and in the same manner, under the work of the human ant-heap, at the end of an hour the coverings of the archbishop's palace had as completely disappeared. Next, it was the turn for the bones to go—where the ants stop discouraged, man destroys; by two o'clock in the afternoon the bones had disappeared like the flesh. Of the archbishop's palace not one stone remained on another! By good fortune the archbishop was at his country-house at Conflans; if not he would probably have been destroyed with his town-house.

All this time the drums had called the rappel, but not with that ferocious plying of drumsticks of which they gave us a sample in the month of December, as though to say, "Run, everyone, the town is on fire!" but with feebleness of execution as much as to say, "If you have nothing better to say, come, and you will not have a warm welcome!" So, as the National Guard began to understand the language of the drums, it did not put itself about much. However, a detachment of the 12th Legion, in command of François Arago,—the famous savant, the noble patriot who is now dying, and whom the Academy will probably not dare to praise, except as a savant,—came from the Panthéon towards the city. As ill-luck would have it, his adjutant, who marched on the flank, sabre in hand, gesticulating with it in a manner justified by the circumstances, stuck it into a poor fellow, who was merely peacefully standing watching them go by. The poor devil fell, wounded, and was picked up nearly dead. We know how such a thing as that operates: the dead or wounded is no longer his own private property; he belongs to the crowd, which makes a standard of him, as it were. The crowd took possession of the man, bleeding as he was, and began to shout, "To arms! Vengeance on the assassin! Vengeance!" The assassin, or, rather, the unintentional murderer, had disappeared. They carried the victim into the enclosure outside Notre-Dame, where everybody discussed loudly how to take revenge for him, and pitied him, but none thought of getting him help. It was François Arago, who made an appeal to humanity out of the

midst of the threatening cries, and pointed to the Hôtel-Dieu, open to receive him, and, if possible, to cure the dying man. They placed him on a stretcher, and François Arago accompanied the unfortunate man to the bedside, where they had scarcely laid him before he died.

The report of that death spread with the fearful rapidity with which bad news always travels. When Arago re-appeared the crowd turned in earnest to wrath; it was in one of those moods when it sharpens its teeth and nails, and aches to tear to pieces and to devour. . . . What? In such a crisis it matters but little what, so long as it can tear and devour someone or something! It was frenzied to the extent of hurling itself upon Arago himself, mistaking the saviour for the murderer. In the twinkling of an eye our great astronomer was dragged towards the Seine, where he was going to be flung with the furniture, books and archiepiscopal vestments; when, happily, some of the spectators recognised him, called out his name, setting forth his reputation and his popularity in order to save him from death. When recognised, he was safe; but, robbed of a man, the excited crowd had to have something else, and, not being able to drown Arago, they demolished the archbishop's palace. With what rapidity they destroyed that building we have already spoken. And the remarkable thing was that many honourable witnesses watched the proceedings. M. Thiers was present, making his first practical study of the downfall of palaces and of monarchies. M. de Schonen was there, in colonel's uniform, but reduced to powerlessness because he had but few men at command. M. Talabot was there with his battalion; but he averred to M. Arago, who urged him to act, that he had been ordered to *appear and then to return.* The passive presence of all these notable persons at the riot of the archbishop's palace put a seal of sanction upon the proceedings, which I had never seen before, or have ever again seen at any other riot. This was no riot of the people, filled with enthusiasm, risking their lives in the midst of flashings of musketry fire and thunder of artillery; it was a riot in yellow kid-gloves, and overcoats and coats, it was a scoffing

and impious, destructive and insolent crowd, without the excuse of previous insult or destruction offered it; in fact, it was a bourgeois riot, that most pitiless and contemptible of all riots.

I returned home heart-broken: I am wrong, I mean upset. I learnt that night that they had wished to demolish Notre-Dame, and only a very little more and the chef-d'œuvre of four centuries, begun by Charlemagne and finished by Philippe-Auguste, would have disappeared in a few hours as the archbishop's palace had done. As I returned home, I had passed by the Palais-Royal. The king who had refused to make to Casimir Périer the sacrifice of the fleurs-de-lis, made that sacrifice to the rioters: they scratched it off the coats-of-arms on his carriages and mutilated the iron balconies of his palace.

The next day a decree appeared in the *Moniteur*, altering the three fleurs-de-lis of Charles v. this time to two tables of the law. If genealogy be established by coats-of-arms we should have to believe that the King of France was descended from Moses rather than from St. Louis! Only, these new tables of the law, the counterfeit of those of Sinai, had not even the excuse of being accepted out of the midst of thunders and lightnings.

It was upon this particular day, on Lamy's desk, who was Madame Adélaide's secretary, when I saw the grooms engaged in erasing the fleurs-de-lis from the king's carriages, thinking that it was not in this fashion that they should have been taken away from the arms of the house of France, that I sent in my resignation a second time, the only one which reached the king and which was accepted. It was couched in the following terms:—

"15 *February* 1831

"SIRE,—Three weeks ago I had the honour to ask for an audience of your Majesty; my object was to offer my resignation to your Majesty by word of mouth; for I wished to explain, personally, that I was neither ungrateful, nor capricious. Sire, a long time ago I wrote and made public my opinion that, in my case, the man of letters was but the prelude to the politician. I have arrived at the age when I can take a part in a reformed

Chamber. I am pretty sure of being nominated a député when I am thirty years of age, and I am now twenty-eight, Sire. Unhappily, the People, who look at things from a mean and distant point of view, do not distinguish between the intentions of the king, and the acts of the ministers. Now the acts of the ministers are both arbitrary and destructive of liberty. Amongst the persons who live upon your Majesty, and tell him constantly that they admire and love him, there is not one probably, who loves your Majesty more than I do; only they talk about it and do not think it, and I do not talk about it but think it.

"But, Sire, devotion to principles comes before devotion to men. Devotion to principles makes men like La Fayette; devotion to men, like Rovigo.[1] I therefore pray your Majesty to accept my resignation.

"I have the honour to remain your Majesty's respectful servant, ALEX. DUMAS"

It was an odd thing! In the eyes of the Republican party, to which I belonged, I was regarded as a thorough Republican, because I took my share in all the risings, and wanted to see the flag of '92 float at the head of our armies; but, at the same time, I could not understand how, when they had taken a Bourbon as their king, whether he was of the Elder or Younger branch of the house, he could be at the same time a Valois, as they had tried to make the good people of Paris believe,—I could not, I say, understand, how the fleurs-de-lis could cease to be his coat-of-arms.

It was because I was both a poet and a Republican, and already comprehended and maintained, contrary to certain narrow-minded people of our party, that France, even though democratic, did not date from '89 only; that we nineteenth century men had received a vast inheritance of glory and must preserve it; that the fleurs-de-lis meant the lance heads of Clovis, and the javelins of Charlemagne; that they had floated

[1] We are compelled to admit that, in our opinion, the parallel between La Fayette and the Duc de Rovigo is to the disadvantage of the latter; but how far he is above them in comparing him with other men of the empire! La Fayette's love for liberty is sublime; the devotion of the Duc de Rovigo for Napoleon is worthy of respect, for all devotion is a fine and rare thing, as times go.

successively at Tolbiac, at Tours, at Bouvines, at Taillebourg, at Rosbecque, at Patay, at Fornovo, Ravenna, Marignan, Renty, Arques, Rocroy, Steinkerque, Almanza, Fontenoy, upon the seas of India and the lakes of America; that, after the success of fifty victories, we suffered the glory of a score of defeats which would have been enough to annihilate another nation; that the Romans invaded us, and we drove them out, the Franks too, who were also expelled; the English invaded us, and we drove them out.

The opinion I am now putting forth with respect to the erasing of the fleurs-de-lis, which I upheld very conspicuously at that time by my resignation, was also the opinion of Casimir Périer. The next day after the fleurs-de-lis had disappeared from the king's carriages, from the balconies of the Palais-Royal and even from Bayard's shield, whilst the effigy of Henry IV. was preserved on the Cross of the Legion of Honours; M. Chambolle, who has since started the Orleanist paper, *l'Ordre*, called at M. Casimir Périer's house.

"Why," the latter asked him, "in the name of goodness, does the king give up his armorial bearings? Ah! He would not do it after the Revolution, when I advised him to sacrifice them; no, he would not hear of their being effaced then, and stuck to them more tenaciously than did his elders. Now, the riot has but to pass under his windows and behold his escutcheon lies in the gutter!"

Those who knew what an irascible character Casimir Périer was, will not be surprised at the flowers of rhetoric with which those words are adorned.

But now that there is no longer an archbishop's palace, nor any fleurs-de-lis, and the statue of the Duc de Berry about to be knocked down at Lille, the seminary of Perpignan pillaged and the busts of Louis XVIII. and of Charles X. of Nimes destroyed, let us return to *Antony*, which was to cause a great disturbance in literature, besides which the riots we have just been discussing were but as the holiday games of school children.

CHAPTER III

My dramatic faith wavers—Bocage and Dorval reconcile me with myself—A political trial wherein I deserved to figure—Downfall of the Laffitte Ministry—Austria and the Duc de Modena—Maréchal Maison is Ambassador at Vienna—The story of one of his dispatches—Casimir Périer Prime Minister—His reception at the Palais-Royal—They make him the *amende honorable*

WE saw what small success *Antony* obtained at the reading before M. Crosnier. The consequence was that just as they had not scrupled to pass my play over for the drama of *Don Carlos ou l'Inquisition*, at the Théâtre-Français, they did not scruple, at the Porte-Saint-Martin, to put on all or any sort of piece that came to their hands before they looked at mine. Poor *Antony*! It had already been in existence for close upon two years; but this delay, it must be admitted, instead of injuring it in any way, was, on the contrary, to turn to very profitable account. During those two years, events had progressed and had brought about in France one of those feverish situations wherein the explosions of eccentric individuals cause immense noise. There was something sickly and degenerate in the times, which answered to the monomania of my hero. Meanwhile, as I have said, I had no settled opinion about my drama; my youthful faith in myself had only held out for *Henri III.* and *Christine*; but the horrible concert of hootings which had deafened me at the representation of the latter piece had shattered that faith to its very foundations. Then the Revolution had come, which had thrown me into quite another order of ideas, and had made me believe I was destined to become what in politics is called a man of action, a

belief which had succumbed yet more rapidly than my literary belief.

Next had taken place the representation of my *Napoléon Bonaparte*, a work whose worthlessness I recognised with dread in spite of the fanatical enthusiasm it had excited at its reading. Then came *Antony*, which inspired no fanaticism nor enthusiasm, neither at its reading nor at its rehearsal; which, in my inmost conscience, I believed was destined to close my short series of successes with failure. Were, perchance, M. Fossier, M. Oudard, M. Picard and M. Deviolaine right? Would it have been better for me *to go to my office*, as the author of *la Petite Ville* and *Deux Philibert* had advised? It was rather late in the day to make such reflections as these, just after I had sent in my resignation definitely. I did not make them any the less for that, nor did they cheer me any the more on that account. My comfort was that Crosnier did not seem to set any higher value upon *Marion Delorme* than upon *Antony*, and I was a great admirer of *Marion Delorme*. I might be deceived in my own piece, but assuredly I was not mistaken about that of Hugo; while, on the other hand, Crosnier might be wrong about Hugo's piece, and therefore equally mistaken about mine. Meanwhile, the rehearsals continued their course.

That which I had foreseen happened: in proportion as the rehearsals advanced, the two principal parts taken by Madame Dorval and by Bocage assumed entirely different aspects than they did when represented by Mademoiselle Mars and Firmin. The absence of scholastic traditions, the manner of acting drama, a certain sympathy of the actors with their parts, a sympathy which did not exist at the Théâtre Français, all by degrees helped to reinstate poor *Antony* in my own opinion. It is but fair to say that, when the two great artistes, upon whom the success of the play depended, felt the day of representation drawing nearer, they developed, as if in emulation with one another, qualities they were themselves unconscious they possessed. Dorval brought out a dignity of feeling in the expression of the emotions, of which I

should have thought her quite incapable ; and Bocage, on whom I had only looked at first as capable of a kind of misanthropic barbarity, had moments of poetic sadness and of dreamy melancholy that I had only seen in Talma in his rôles of the English rendering of Hamlet, and in Soumet's Orestes. The representation was fixed for the first fortnight in April ; but, at the same time, a drama was being played at the *Palais de justice*, which, even to my eyes, was far more interesting than my own.

My friends Guinard, Cavaignac and Trélat, with sixteen other fellow-prisoners, were brought up before the Court of Assizes. It will be recollected that it was on account of the Artillery conspiracy, wherein I had taken an active part ; therefore, one thing alone surprised me, why they should be in prison and I free ; why they should have to submit to the cross-questionings of the law court whilst I was rehearsing a piece at the Porte-Saint-Martin. Between the 6th and the 11th of April the audiences had been devoted to the interrogation of the prisoners and to the hearing of witnesses. On the 12th, the Solicitor-General took up the case. I need hardly say that from the 12th to the 15th, the day when sentence was passed, I never left the sittings. It was a difficult task for the Solicitor-General to accuse men like those seated on the prisoners' bench, who were the chief combatants of July, and pronounced the "heroes of the Three Days," those whom the Lieutenant-General had received, flattered and pampered ten months back ; the men whom Dupont (de l'Eure) referred to as his friends, whom La Fayette had called his children and whom, when he was no longer in the Ministry, Laffitte had called his accomplices. As a matter of fact, the Laffitte Ministry had fallen on 9 March. The cause of that fall could not have been more creditable to the former friend of King Louis-Philippe ; he had found that five months of political friction with the new monarch had been enough to turn him into one of his most irreconcilable enemies. It was the time when three nations rose up and demanded their independent national rights : Belgium, Poland and Italy. People's minds

were nearly settled about Belgium's fate; but not so with regard to Poland and Italy; and all generous hearts felt sympathy with those two Sisters in Liberty who were groaning, the one beneath the sword blade of the Czar, the other under Austria's chastisement. Attention was riveted in particular upon Modena. The Duke of Modena had fled from his duchy when he heard the news of the insurrection of Bologna, on the night of 4 February. The Cabinet at the Palais-Royal received a communication upon the subject from the Cabinet of Vienna, informing it that the Austrian government was preparing to intervene to replace Francis IV. upon his ducal throne. It was curious news and an exorbitant claim to make. The French Government had proclaimed the principle of non-intervention; now, upon what grounds could Austria interfere in the Duchy of Modena? Austria had, indeed, a right of reversion over that duchy; but the right was entirely conditional, and, until the day when all the male heirs of the reigning house should be extinct, Modena could be a perfectly independent duchy. Such demands were bound to revolt so upright and fair a mind as M. Laffitte's, and he vowed in full council that, if Austria persisted in that insolent claim, France would go to war with her.

M. Sébastiani, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was asked by the President of the Council to reply to this effect, which he engaged to do. Maréchal Maison was then at the embassy of Vienna. He was one of those stiff and starched diplomatists who preserve the habit, from their military career, of addressing kings and emperors with their hand upon their sword hilts. I knew him very well, and in spite of our difference of age, with some degree of intimacy; a charming woman with a pacific name who was a mere friend to me, but who was a good deal more than a friend to him, served as the bond between the young poet and the old soldier. The Marshal was commissioned to present M. Laffitte's *Ultimatum* to Austria. It was succinct: "Non-intervention or War!" The system of peace at any price adopted by Louis-Philippe was not yet known at that period. Austria replied as though she knew the

secret thoughts of the King of France. Her reply was both determined and insolent. This is it—

"Until now, Austria has allowed France to advance the principle of non-intervention; but it is time France knew that we do not intend to recognise it where Italy is concerned. We shall carry our arms wherever insurrection spreads. If that intervention leads to war—then war there must be! We prefer to incur the chances of war than to be exposed to perish in the midst of outbreaks of rebellion."

With the instruction the Marshal received, the note above quoted did not permit of any agreement being reached; consequently, at the same time that he sent M. de Metternich's reply to King Louis-Philippe, he wrote to General Guilleminot, our ambassador at Constantinople, that France was forced into war and that he must make an appeal to the ancient alliance between Turkey and France. Marshal Maison added in a postscript to M. de Metternich's note—

"Not a moment must be lost in which to avert the danger with which France is threatened; we must, consequently, take the initiative and pour a hundred thousand men into Piedmont."

This dispatch was addressed to M. Sébastiani, Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom, in his capacity as ambassador, Marshal Maison corresponded direct; it reached the Hôtel des Capucines on 4 March. M. Sébastiani, a king's man, communicated it to the king, but, important though it was, never said one word about it to M. Laffitte. That is the fashion in which the king, following the first principle of constitutional government, reigned, but did not rule. How did the *National* obtain that dispatch? We should be very puzzled to say; but, on the 8th, it was reproduced word for word in the second column of that journal. M. Laffitte read it by chance, as La Fayette had read his dismissal from the commandantship of the National Guard by accident. M. Laffitte got into a carriage, paper in hand and drove to M. Sébastiani. He could not deny it: the Marshal alleged such poor reasons, that

M. Laffitte saw he had been completely tricked. He went on to the Palais-Royal, where he hoped to gain explanations which the Minister for Foreign Affairs refused to give him; but the king knew nothing at all; the king was busy looking after the building at Neuilly and did not trouble his head about affairs of State, he took no initiative and approved of his ministry. M. Laffitte must settle the matter with his colleagues. There was so much apparent sincerity and naïve simplicity in the tone, attitude and appearance of the king that Laffitte thought he could not be an accomplice in the plot. Next day, therefore, he took the king's advice and had an explanation with his colleagues. That explanation led, there and then, to the resignation of the leader of the Cabinet, who returned to his home with his spirit less broken, perhaps, by the prospect of his ruined house and lost popularity than by his betrayed friendship. M. Laffitte was a noble-hearted man who had given himself wholly to the king, and behold, in the very face of the insult that had been put upon France, the king, in his new attitude of preserver of peace, threw him over just as he had thrown over La Fayette and Dupont (de l'Eure). Laffitte was flung remorselessly and without pity into the gulf wherein Louis-Philippe flung his popular favourites when he had done with them. The new ministry was made up all ready, in advance; the majority of its members were taken from the old one. The only new ministers were Casimir Périer, Baron Louis and M. de Rigny. The various offices of the members were as follows: Casimir Périer, Prime Minister; Sébastiani, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Baron Louis, Minister of Finance; Barthe, Minister of Justice; Montalivet, Minister of Education and Religious Instruction; Comte d'Argout, Minister of Commerce and Public Works; de Rigny, Minister for the Admiralty. The new ministry nearly lost its prime minister the very next day after he had been appointed, viz., on 13 March 1831. It was only with regret that Madame Adélaïde and the Duc d'Orléans saw Casimir Périer come into power. Was it from regret at the ingratitude shown to M. Laffitte? or was

it fear on account of M. Casimir Périer's well-known character? Whatever may have been the case, on 14 March, when the new president of the Council appeared at the Palais-Royal to pay his respects at court that night, he found a singular expression upon all faces: the courtiers laughed, the aides-de-camp whispered together, the servants asked whom they must announce. M. le duc d'Orléans turned his back upon him, Madame Adélaïde was as cold as ice, the queen was grave. The king alone waited for him, smiling, at the bottom of the salon. The minister had to pass through a double hedge of people who wished to repel him, malevolent to him, in order to reach the king. The rival and successor to Laffitte was angry, proud and impatient; he resolved to take his revenge at once. He knew the man who was indispensable to the situation; Thiers was not yet sufficiently popular, M. Guizot was already too little so. Casimir Périer went straight to the king.

"Sire," he said to him, "I have the honour to ask you for a private interview."

The king, amazed, walked before him and led him into his cabinet. The door was scarcely closed when, without circumlocution or ambiguity, the new prime minister burst out with—

"Sire, I have the honour to offer my resignation to Your Majesty."

"Eh! good Lord, Monsieur Périer," exclaimed the king "and on what grounds?"

"Sire," replied the exasperated minister, "that I have enemies at the clubs, in the streets, in the Chamber matters nothing; but enemies at the very court to which I am bold enough unreservedly to offer my whole fortune is too much to endure! and I do not feel equal, I confess to Your Majesty to face these many forms of hatred."

The king felt the thrust, and realised that it must be warded off, under the circumstances, for it might be fatal to himself. Then, in his most flattering tones and with that seductive charm of manner in which he excelled, the king

set himself to smooth down this minister's wounded pride. But with the inflexible haughtiness of his character, Casimir Périer persisted.

"Sire," he said, "I have the honour to offer my resignation to Your Majesty."

The king saw he must make adequate amends.

"Wait ten minutes here, my dear Monsieur Périer," he said; "and in ten minutes you shall be free."

The minister bowed in silence, and let the king leave him.

In that ten minutes the king explained to the queen, to his sister and his son, the urgent necessity there was for him to keep M. Casimir Périer, and told them the resolution the latter had just taken to hand in his resignation. This was a fresh order altogether, and in a few seconds it was made known to all whom it concerned. The king opened the door of his cabinet, where the minister was still biting his nails and stamping his feet.

"Come!" he said.

Casimir Périer bowed lightly and followed the king. But thanks to the new command, everything was changed. The queen was gracious; Madame Adélaïde was affable; M. le duc d'Orléans had turned round, the aides-de-camp stood in a group ready to obey at the least sign from the king, and also from the minister; the courtiers smiled obsequiously. Finally, the lackeys, when M. Périer reached the door, flew into the ante-chambers and rushed down the stairs crying, "M. le president du Conseil's carriage!" A more rapid and startling reparation could not possibly have been obtained. Thus Casimir Périer remained a minister, and the new president of the council then started that arduous career which was to end in the grave in a year's time; he died only a few weeks before his antagonist Lamarque.

This was how matters stood when we took a fresh course, in the full tide of the trial of the artillery, to speak of M. Laffitte.

But, once for all, we are not writing history, only jotting down our recollections, and often we find that at the very moment when we have galloped off to follow up some byway

of our memory we have left behind us events of the first importance. We are then obliged to retrace our steps, to make our apologies to those events, as the king had to do to M. Casimir Périer; to take them, as it were, by the hand, and to lead them back to our readers, who perhaps do not always accord them quite such a gracious reception as that which the Court of the Palais-Royal gave to the President of the Council on the evening of 14 March 1831.

CHAPTER IV

Trial of the artillerymen—Procureur-général Miller—Pescheux d'Herbinville—Godefroy Cavaignac—Acquittal of the accused—The ovation they received—Commissioner Gourdin—The cross of July—The red and black ribbon—Final rehearsals of *Antony*

WE have mentioned what a difficult matter it was for a solicitor-general to prosecute the men who were still black from the powder of July, such men as Trélat, Cavaignac, Guinard, Sambuc, Danton, Chaparre and their fellow-prisoners. All these men, moreover (except Commissioner Gourdin, against whose morality, by the way, there was absolutely nothing to be said), lived by their private fortune or their own talents, and were, for the most part, more of them well to do than poorly off. They could therefore only be proceeded against on account of an opinion regarded as dangerous from the point of view of the Government, though they were undoubtedly disinterested. Miller, the solicitor-general, had the wit to grasp the situation, and at the outset of his charge against the prisoners he turned to the accused and said—

"We lament as much as any other person to see these honoured citizens at the bar, whose private life seems to command much esteem; young men, rich in noble thoughts and generous inspirations. It is not for us, gentlemen, to seek to call in question their title to public consideration, or to the good-will of their fellow-citizens, and to a recognition of the services they have rendered their country."

The audience, visibly won over by this preamble, made a murmur of approbation which it would certainly have repressed if it had had patience to wait the sequel. The attorney-general went on—

"But do the services that they have been able to render the State give them the right to shake it to its very foundations, if it is not administered according to doctrines which suited imaginations that, as likely as not, are ill-regulated? Is the impetuous ardour of youth enough excuse for legalising actions which alarm all good citizens, and harm all interests? Must peaceable men become the victims of the culpable machinations of those who talk about liberty, and yet attack the liberty of others, and boast that they are working for the good of France while they violently break all social bonds?"

Judge in what a contemptuous attitude the prisoners received these tedious and banal observations. Far from dreaming of defending themselves, they felt that as soon as the moment should come for charging it would be they who should take the offensive. Pescheux d'Herbinville, the leader, burst forth in fury and crushed both judges and attorney-general.

"Monsieur Pescheux d'Herbinville," President Hardouin said to him, "you are accused of having had arms in your possession, and of distributing them. Do you admit the fact?"

Pescheux d'Herbinville rose. He was a fine-looking young man of twenty-two or three, fair, carefully dressed, and of refined manners; the cartridges that had been seized at his house were wrapped in silk-paper, and ornamented with rose-coloured favours.

"I not only," he said, "admit the fact, monsieur le président, but I am proud of it. . . . Yes, I had arms, and plenty of them too! And I am going to tell you how I got them. In July I took three posts in succession at the head of a handful of men in the midst of the firing; the arms that I had were those of the soldiers I had disarmed. Now, I fought for the people, and these soldiers were firing on the people. Am I guilty for taking away the arms which in the hands in which they were found were dealing death to citizens?"

A round of applause greeted these words.

"As to distributing them," continued the prisoner, "it is quite true I did it; and not only did I distribute them, but

believing that, in our unsettled times, it was as well to acquaint the friends of France with their enemies, at my own expense, although I am not a rich man, I provided some of the men who had followed me with the uniform of the National Guard. It was to those same men I distributed the arms, to which, indeed, they had a right, since they helped me to take them. You have asked me what I have to say in my defence, and I have told you."

He sat down amidst loud applause, which only ceased after repeated orders from the president.

Next came Cavaignac's turn.

"You accuse me of being a Republican," he said; "I uphold that accusation both as a title of honour and a paternal heritage. My father was one of those who proclaimed the Republic from the heart of the National Convention, before the whole of Europe, then victorious; he defended it before the armies, and that was why he died in exile, after twelve years of banishment; and whilst the Restoration itself was obliged to let France have the fruits of that revolution which he had served, whilst it overwhelmed with favours those men whom the Republic had created, my father and his colleagues alone suffered for the great cause which many others betrayed! It was the last homage their impotent old age could offer to the country they had vigorously defended in their youth! . . . That cause, gentlemen, colours all my feelings as his son; and the principles which it embraced are my heritage. Study has naturally strengthened the bent given to my political opinions, and now that the opportunity is given me to utter a word which multitudes proscribe, I pronounce it without affection, and without fear, at heart and from conviction I am a Republican!"

It was the first time such a declaration of principles had been made boldly and publicly before both the court of law and society; it was accordingly received at first in dumb stupor, which was immediately followed by a thunder of applause. The president realised that he could not struggle against such enthusiasm; he let the applause calm down, and Cavaignac

continue his speech. Godefroy Cavaignac was an orator, and more eloquent than his brother, although he, like General Lamarque and General Foy, gave utterance to some eminently French sentiments which enter more deeply into people's hearts than the most beautiful speeches. Cavaignac continued with increasing triumph. Finally, he summed up his opinions and hopes, and those of the party, which, then almost unnoticed, was to triumph seventeen years later—

"The Revolution! Gentlemen, you attack the Revolution! What folly! The Revolution includes the whole nation, except those who exploit it; it is our country, fulfilling the sacred mission of freeing the people entrusted to it by Providence; it is the whole of France, doing its duty to the world! As for ourselves, we believe in our hearts that we have done our duty to France, and every time she has need of us, no matter what she, our revered mother, asks of us, we, her faithful sons, will obey her!"

It is impossible to form any idea of the effect this speech produced; pronounced as it was in firm tones, with a frank and open face, eyes flashing with enthusiasm and heartfelt conviction. From that moment the cause was won: to have found these men guilty would have caused a riot, perhaps even a revolution. The questions put to the jury were forty-six in number. At a quarter to twelve, noon, the jurymen went into their consulting room: they came out at half-past three, and pronounced the accused men not guilty on any one of the forty-six indictments. There was one unanimous shout of joy, almost of enthusiasm, clapping of hands and waving of hats; everyone rushed out, striding over the benches, overturning things in their way; they wanted to shake hands with any one of the nineteen prisoners, whether they knew him or not. They felt that life, honour and future principles had been upheld by those prisoners arraigned at the bar. In the midst of this hubbub the president announced that they were set at liberty. There remained, therefore, nothing further for the accused to do but to escape the triumphant reception awaiting them. Victories, in these cases, are often worse than defeats: I

recollect the triumph of Louis Blanc on 15 May. Guinard, Cavaignac and the students from the schools succeeded in escaping the ovation: instead of leaving by the door of the Conciègerie, which led to the Quai des Lunettes, they left by the kitchen door and passed out unrecognised. Trélat, Pescheux d'Herbinville and three friends (Achille Roche, who died young and very promising, Avril and Lhéritier) had got into a carriage, and had told the driver to drive as fast as he could; but they were recognised through the closed windows. Instantly the carriage was stopped, the horses taken out, the doors opened; they had to get out, pass through the crowd, bow in response to the cheering and walk through waving handkerchiefs, the flourishing of hats and shouts of "Vivent-les républicains!" as far as Trélat's home. Guilley, also recognised, was still less fortunate: they carried him in their arms, in spite of all his protests and efforts to escape. Only one of them, who left by the main entrance, passed through the crowd unrecognised, Commissionaire Gourdin, who pushed a hand-cart containing his luggage and that of his comrades in captivity, which he carried back home.

This acquittal sent me back to my rehearsals; and it was almost settled for *Antony* to be run during the last days of April. But the last days of April were to find us thrown back into an altogether different sort of agitation. The law of 13 December 1830 with respect to national rewards had ordained the creation of a new order of merit which was to be called the *Cross of July*. There had been a reason for this creation which might excuse the deed, and which had induced republicans to support the law. A decoration which recalls civil war and a victory won by citizens over fellow-citizens, by the People over the Army or by the Army over the People, is always a melancholy object; but, as I say, there was an object underlying it different from this. It was to enable people to recognise one another on any given occasion, and to know, consequently, on whom to rely. These crosses had been voted by committees comprised of fighters who were difficult to deceive;

for, out of their twelve members, of which, I believe, each bureau consisted, there were always two or three who, if the cross were misplaced on some unworthy breast, were able to set the error right, or to contradict it. The part I took in the Revolution was sufficiently public for this cross to be voted to me without disputes; but, besides, as soon as the crosses were voted, as the members of the different committees could not give each other crosses, I was appointed a member of the committee commissioned to vote crosses to the first distributors. The institution was therefore, superficially, quite popular and fundamentally Republican. Thus we were astounded when, on 30 April, an order appeared, countersigned by Casimir Périer, laying down the following points—

"The Cross of July shall consist of a three-branched star. The reverse side shall bear on it: 27, 28 and 29 *July* 1830. It shall have for motto: *Given by the King of the French.* It shall be worn on a blue ribbon edged with red. The citizens decorated with the July Cross SHALL BE PREPARED TO SWEAR FIDELITY TO THE KING OF THE FRENCH, and obedience to the Constitutional Charter and to the laws of the realm."

The order was followed by a list of the names of the citizens to whom the cross was awarded. I had seen my name on the list, with great delight, and on the same day I, who had never worn any cross, except on solemn occasions, bought a red and black ribbon and put it in my buttonhole. The red and black ribbon requires an explanation. We had decided, in our programme which was thus knocked on the head by the Royal command, that the ribbon was to be red, edged with black. The red was to be a reminder of the blood that had been shed; the black, for the mourning worn. I did not, then, feel that I could submit to that portion of the order which decreed blue ribbon edged with red,—any more than to the motto: *Given by the King*, or to the oath of fidelity to the king, the Constitutional Charter and the laws of

the kingdom. Many followed my example, and, at the Tuileries, where I went for a walk to see if some agent of authority would come and pick a quarrel with me on account of my ribbon, I found a dozen decorated persons, among whom were two or three of my friends, who, no doubt, had gone there with the same intention as mine. Furthermore, the National Guard was, at that date, on duty at the Tuileries, and they presented arms to the red and black ribbon as to that of the Légion d'honneur. At night, we learnt that there was to be a meeting at Higonnet's, to protest against the colour of the ribbon, the oath and the motto. I attended and protested; and, next day, I went to my rehearsal wearing my ribbon. That was on 1 May; we had arrived at general rehearsals, and, as I have said, I was becoming reconciled to my piece, without, however,—so different was it from conventional notions—having any idea whether the play would succeed or fail. But the success which the two principal actors would win was incontestable. Bocage had made use of every faculty to bring out the originality of the character he had to represent, even to the physical defects we have notified in him.

Madame Dorval had made the very utmost out of the part of Adèle. She enunciated her words with admirable precision, all the striking points were brought out, except one which she had not yet discovered. "Then I am lost!" she had to exclaim, when she heard of her husband's arrival. Well, she did not know how to render those four words: "Then I am lost!" And yet she realised that, if said properly, they would produce a splendid effect. All at once an illumination flashed across her mind.

"Are you here, author?" she asked, coming to the edge of the footlights to scan the orchestra.

"Yes . . . what is it?" I replied.

"How did Mlle. Mars say: 'Then I am lost!'?"

"She was sitting down, and got up."

"Good!" replied Dorval, returning to her place, "I will be standing, and will sit down."

The rehearsal was finished; Alfred de Vigny had been present, and given me some good hints. I had made Antony an atheist, he made me obliterate that blot in the part. He predicted a grand success for me. We parted, he persisting in his opinion, I shaking my head dubiously. Bocage led me into his dressing-room to show me his costume. I say *costume*, for although Antony was clad like ordinary mortals, in a cravat, frock-coat, waistcoat and trousers, there had to be, on account of the eccentricity of the character, something peculiar in the set of the cravat and shape of the waistcoat, in the cut of the coat and in the set of the trousers. I had, moreover, given Bocage my own ideas on the subject, which he had adapted to perfection; and, seeing him in those clothes, people understood from the very first that the actor did not represent just an ordinary man. It was settled that the piece should be definitely given on 3 May; I had then only two more rehearsals before the great day. The preceding ones had been sadly neglected by me; I attended the last two with extreme assiduity. When Madame Dorval reached the sentence which had troubled her for long, she kept her word: she was standing and sank into an armchair as though the earth had given way under her feet, and exclaimed, "Then I am lost!" in such accents of terror that the few persons who were present at the rehearsal broke into cheers. The final general rehearsal was held with closed doors; it is always a mistake to introduce even the most faithful of friends to a general rehearsal: on the day of the performance they tell the plot of the play to their neighbours, or walk about the corridors talking in loud voices, and creaking their boots on the floor. I have never taken much credit to myself for giving theatre tickets to my friends for the first performance; but I have always repented of giving them tickets of admission for a general rehearsal. Against this it will be argued that spectators can give good advice: in the first place, it is too late to act upon any important suggestion at general rehearsals; then, those who really

offer valuable advice, during the course of rehearsals, are the actors, firemen, scene-shifters, supernumeraries and everybody, in fact, who lives by the stage, and who know the theatre much better than all the Bachelors of Arts and Academicians in existence. Well, then! my theatrical world had predicted *Antony's* success, scene-shifters, firemen craning their necks round the wings, actors and actresses and supers going into the auditorium and watching the scenes in which they didn't appear. The night of production had come.

CHAPTER V

The first representation of *Antony*—The play, the actors, the public—*Antony* at the Palais-Royal—Alterations of the *dénoûment*

THE times were unfavourable for literature: all minds were turned upon politics, and disturbances were flying in the air as, on hot summer evenings, swifts fly overhead with their shrill screams, and black-winged bats wheel round. My piece was as well put on as it could be; but, except for the expenditure of talent which the actors were going to make, M. Crosnier had gone to no other cost; not a single new carpet or decoration, not even a salon was renovated. The work might fail without regret, for it had only cost the manager the time spent over the rehearsals.

The curtain rose, Madame Dorval, in her gauze dress and town attire, a society woman, in fact, was a novelty at the theatre, where people had recently seen her in *Les Deux Forçats*, and in *Le Joueur*: so her early scenes only met with a half-hearted success; her harsh voice, round shoulders and peculiar gestures, of which she so often made use that, in the scenes which contained no passionate action, they became merely vulgar, naturally did not tell in favour of the play or the actress. Two or three admirably true inflections, however, found grace with the audience, but did not arouse its enthusiasm sufficiently to extract one single cheer from it. It will be recollected that Bocage has very little to do in the first act: he is brought in fainting, and the only chance he has for any effect is where he tears off the bandage from his wound, uttering, as he faints away for the second time: "And now I shall remain, shall I not?" Only after that sentence did the audience begin to understand the piece, and to feel the

hidden dramatic possibilities of a work whose first act ended thus. The curtain fell in the midst of applause. I had ordered the intervals between the acts to be short. I went behind the scenes myself to hurry the actors, managers and scene-shifters. In five minutes' time, before the excitement had had time to cool down, the curtain went up again. The second act fell to the share of Bocage entirely. He threw himself vigorously into it, but not egotistically, allowing Dorval as much part as she had a right to take; he rose to a magnificent height in the scene of bitter misanthropy and amorous threatening, a scene, by the bye, which—except for that of the foundlings—took up pretty nearly the whole act. I repeat that Bocage was really sublime in these parts: intelligence of mind, nobleness of heart, expression of countenance,—the very type of the Antony, as I had conceived him, was presented to the public. After the act, whilst the audience were still clapping, I went behind to congratulate him heartily. He was glowing with enthusiasm and encouragement, and Dorval told him, with the frankness of genius, how delighted she was with him. Dorval had no fears at all. She knew that the fourth and fifth acts were hers, and quietly waited her turn. When I re-entered the theatre it was in a state of excitement; one could feel the air charged with those emotions which go to the making of great success. I began to believe that I was right, and the whole world wrong, even my manager; I except Alfred de Vigny, who had predicted success. My readers know the third act, it is all action, brutal action; with regard to violence, it bears a certain likeness to the third act of *Henri III.*, where the Duc de Guise crushes his wife's wrist to force her to give Saint-Mégrin a rendezvous in her own handwriting. Happily, the third act at the Théâtre-Français having met with success, it made a stepping-stone for that at the Porte-Saint-Martin. Antony, in pursuit of Adèle, is the first to reach a village inn, where he seizes all the post-horses to oblige her to stop there, chooses the room that suits him best of the only two in the house, arranges an entrance into Adèle's room from the balcony, and withdraws as he hears the sound

of her carriage wheels. Adèle enters and begs to be supplied with horses. She is only a few leagues from Strassburg, where she is on her way to join her husband; the horses taken away by Antony are not to be found: Adèle is obliged to spend the night in the inn. She takes every precaution for her safety, which, the moment she is alone, becomes useless, because of the opening by the balcony, forgotten in her nervous investigations. Madame Dorval was adorable in her feminine simplicity and instinctive terrors. She spoke as no one had spoken, or ever will speak them, those two extremely simple sentences: "But this door will not shut!" and "No accident has ever happened in your hotel, Madame?" Then, when the mistress of the inn has withdrawn, she decides to go into her bedroom. Hardly had she disappeared before a pane of the window falls broken to atoms, an arm appears and unlatches the catch, the window is opened and both Antony and Adèle appear, the one on the balcony of her window, the other on the threshold of the room. At the sight of Antony, Adèle utters a cry. The rest of the scene was terrifyingly realistic. To stop her from crying out again, Antony placed a handkerchief on Adèle's mouth, drags her into the room, and the curtain falls as they are both entering it together. There was a moment of silence in the house. Porcher, the man whom I have pointed out as one of our three or four pretenders to the crown as the most capable of bringing about a restoration, was charged with the office of producing my restoration, but hesitated to give the signal. Mahomet's bridge was not narrower than the thread which at that moment hung Antony suspended between success and failure. Success carried the day, however. A great uproar succeeded the frantic rounds of applause which burst forth in a torrent. They clapped and howled for five minutes. When I have failures, rest assured I will not spare myself; but, meanwhile, I ask leave to be allowed to tell the truth. On this occasion the success belonged to the two actors; I ran behind the theatre to embrace them. No Adèle and no Antony to be found! I thought for a moment that, carried away by the enthusiasm of

the performance, they had resumed the play at the words, "*Antony lui jette un mouchoir sur la bouche, et l'emporte dans sa chambre*," and had continued the piece. I was mistaken: they were both changing their costumes and were shut in their dressing-rooms. I shouted all kinds of endearing terms through the door.

"Are you satisfied?" Bocage inquired.

"Enchanted."

"Bravo! the rest of the piece belongs to Dorval."

"You will not leave her in the lurch?"

"Oh! be easy on that score!"

I ran to Dorval's door.

"It is superb, my child—splendid! magnificent!"

"Is that you, my big bow-wow?"

"Yes."

"Come in, then!"

"But the door is fast."

"To everybody but you." She opened it; she was unstrung; and, half undressed as she was, she flung herself into my arms.

"I think we have secured it, my dear!"

"What?"

"Why! a success, of course!"

"H'm! h'm!"

"Are you not satisfied?"

"Yes, quite."

"Hang it! You would be hard to please, if you were not."

"It seems to me, however, that we have passed out of the worst troubles!"

"True, all has gone well so far; but . . ."

"But what, come, my big bow-wow! Oh! I do love you for giving me such a fine part!"

"Did you see the society women, eh?"

"No."

"What did they say of me?"

"But I did not see them . . ."

"You will see them?"

"Oh yes."

"Then you will repeat what they say . . . but frankly, mind."

"Of course."

"Look, there is my ball dress."

"Pretty swell, I fancy!"

"Oh! big dog, do you know how much you have cost me?"

"No."

"Eight hundred francs!"

"Come here." I whispered a few words in her ear.

"Really?" she exclaimed.

"Certainly!"

"You will do that?"

"Of course, since I have said so."

"Kiss me."

"No."

"Why not?"

"I never kiss people when I make them a present."

"Why?"

"I expect them to kiss me."

She threw her arms round my neck.

"Come now, good luck!" I said to her.

"And you must have it too."

"Courage? I am going to seek it."

"Where?"

"At the Bastille."

"At the Bastille?"

"Yes, I have a notion the beginning of the fourth act will not get on so well."

"Why not?"

"Come now! the fourth act is delightful: I will answer for it."

"Yes, you will make the end go, but not the beginning."

"Ah! yes, that is a *feuilleton* which Grailly speaks."

"Bah! it will succeed all the same: the audience is enthusiastic; we can feel that, all of us."

"Ah! you feel that?"

"Then, too, see you, my big bow-wow; there are people in the stalls of the house, *gentlemen* too! who stare at me as they never have stared before."

"I don't wonder."

"I say . . ."

"What?"

"If I am going to become the rage?"

"It only depends on yourself."

"Liar!"

"I swear it only depends on yourself."

"Yes . . . but . . . Alfred, eh?"

"Exactly!"

"Upon my word, so much the worse! We shall see."

The voice of the stage-manager called Madame Dorval!

"Can we begin?"

"No, no, no; I am not dressed yet, I am only in my chemise! He's a pretty fellow, that Moëssard! What would the audience say? . . . It is you who have hindered me like this . . . Go off with you then!"

"Put me out."

"Go! go! go!"

She kissed me three times and pushed me to the door. Poor lips, then fresh and smiling and trembling, which I was to see closed and frozen for ever at the touch of death!

I went outside; as I was in need of air. I met Bixio in the corridors.

"Come with me," I said.

"Where the dickens are you off to?"

"I am going for a walk."

"What! a walk?"

"Yes!"

"Just when the curtain is going to rise?"

"Exactly! I do not feel sure about the fourth act and would much rather it began without me."

"Are you sure about the end?"

"Oh! the end is a different matter . . . We will come back for that, never fear!"

And we hurried out on to the boulevard.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, as I breathed the air.

"What is the matter with you? . . . Is it your piece that is upsetting you like this?"

"Get along, hang my piece!"

I dragged Bixio in the direction of the Bastille. I do not remember what we talked of. I only know we walked for half a league, there and back, chattering and laughing. If anybody had said to the passers-by, "You see that great lunatic of a man over there? He is the author of the play being acted at this very moment at the theatre of la Porte-Saint-Martin!" they would indeed have been amazed.

I came in again at the right moment, at the scene of the insult. The *feuilleton*, as Dorval called it, meaning the apology for this modern style of drama, the real preface to *Antony*, had passed over without hindrance and had even been applauded. I had a box close to the stage and I made a sign to Dorval that I was there; she signalled back that she saw me. Then the scene began between Adèle and the Vicomtesse, which is summed up in these words, "But I have done nothing to this woman!" Next comes the scene between Adèle and Antony, where Adèle repeatedly exclaims, "She is his mistress!"

Well! I say it after twenty-two years have passed by,—and during those years I have composed many plays, and seen many pieces acted, and applauded many actors,—he who never saw Dorval act those two scenes, although he may have seen the whole repertory of modern drama, can have no conception how far pathos can be carried.

The reader knows how this act ends; the Vicomtesse enters; Adèle, surprised in the arms of Antony, utters a cry and disappears. Behind the Vicomtesse, Antony's servant enters in his turn. He has ridden full gallop from Strassburg, to announce to his master the return of Adèle's husband. Antony dashes from the stage like a madman, or one driven desperate, crying, "Wretch! shall I arrive in time?"

I ran behind the scenes. Dorval was already on the stage,

uncurling her hair and pulling her flowers to pieces; she had at times her moments of transports of passion, exceeding those of the actress. The scene-shifters were altering the scenes, whilst Dorval was acting her part. The audience applauded frantically. "A hundred francs," I cried to the shifters, "if the curtain be raised again before the applause ceases!" In two minutes' time the three raps were given: the curtain rose and the scene-shifters had won their hundred francs. The fifth act began literally before the applause for the fourth had died down. I had one moment of acute anguish. In the middle of the terrible scene where the two lovers, caught in a net of sorrows, are striving to extricate themselves, but can find no means of either living or dying together, a second before Dorval exclaimed, "Then I am lost!" I had, in the stage directions, arranged that Bocage should move the armchair ready to receive Adèle, when she is overwhelmed at the news of her husband's arrival. And Bocage forgot to turn the chair in readiness. But Dorval was too much carried away by passion to be put out by such a trifle. Instead of falling on the cushion, she fell on to the arm of the chair, and uttered a cry of despair, with such a piercing grief of soul wounded, torn, broken, that the whole audience rose to its feet. This time the cheers were not for me at all, but for the actress and for her alone, for her marvellous, magnificent performance! The *dénoûment* is known; it is utterly unexpected, and is summed up in a single phrase of six startling words. The door is burst open by M. de Hervey just as Adèle falls on a sofa, stabbed by Antony.

"Dead?" cries Baron de Hervey.

"Yes, dead!" coldly answers Antony. *Elle me résistait: je l'ai assassinée!* And he flings his dagger at the husband's feet. The audience gave vent to such cries of terror, dismay and sorrow, that probably a third of the audience hardly heard these words, a necessary supplement to the piece, which, however, without them would be nothing but an ordinary intrigue of adultery, unravelled by a simple assassination. The effect, all the same, was tremendous. They called for

the author with frantic cries. Bocage came forward and told them. Then they called for Antony and Adèle again, and both returned to take their share in such an ovation as they had never had, nor ever would have again. For they had both attained to the highest achievement in their art! I flew from my box to go to them, without noticing that the passages were blocked with spectators coming out of their seats. I had not taken four steps before I was recognised; then I had my turn, as the author of the play. A crowd of young persons of my own age (I was twenty-eight), pale, scared, breathless, rushed at me. They pulled me right and left and embraced me. I wore a green coat buttoned up from top to bottom; they tore the tails of it to shreds. I entered the green-room, as Lord Spencer entered his, in a round jacket; the rest of my coat had gone into a state of relics. They were stupefied behind the scenes; they had never seen a success taking such a form before, never before had applause gone so straight from the audience to the actors; and what an audience it was too! The fashionable world, the exquisites who take the best boxes at theatres, those who only applaud from habit, who, this time, made themselves hoarse with shouting so loudly, and had split their gloves with clapping! Crosnier was hidden. Bocage was as happy as a child. Dorval was mad! Oh, good and brave-hearted friends, who, in the midst of their own triumphs, seemed to enjoy my success more even than their own! who put their own talent on one side and loudly extolled the poet and the work! I shall never forget that night; Bocage has not forgotten it either. Only a week ago we were talking of it as though it had happened only yesterday; and I am certain, if such matters are remembered in the other world, Dorval remembers it too! Now, what became of us all after we had been congratulated? I know not. Just as there is around every luminous body a mist, so there was one over the rest of the evening and night, which my memory, after a lapse of twenty-two years, is unable to penetrate. In conclusion, one of the special features of the drama of *Antony* was that it kept the spectators spell-bound to the final fall of the curtain.

As the *morale* of the work was contained in those six words, which Bocage pronounced with such perfect dignity, "*Elle me résistait : je l'ai assassinée !*" everybody remained to hear them, and would not leave until they had been spoken, with the following result. Two or three years after the first production of *Antony*, it became the piece played at all benefit performances; to such an extent that once they asked Dorval and Bocage to act it for the Palais-Royal Theatre. I forget, and it does not matter, for whom the benefit was to be performed. The play met with its accustomed success, thanks to the acting of those two great artistes; only, the manager had been told the wrong moment at which to call the curtain down! So it fell as Antony is stabbing Adèle, and robbed the audience of the final *dénoûment*. That was not what they wanted: it was the *dénoûment* they meant to have; so, instead of going they shouted loudly for *Le dénoûment ! le dénoûment !* They clamoured to such an extent that the manager begged the actors to let him raise the curtain again, and for the piece to be concluded.

Dorval, ever good-natured, resumed her pose in the armchair as the dead woman, while they ran to find Antony. But he had gone into his dressing-room, furious because they had made him miss his final effect, and withdrawing himself into his tent, like Achilles; like Achilles, too, he obstinately refused to come out of it. All the time the audience went on clapping and shouting and calling, "Bocage! Dorval! . . . . Dorval! Bocage!" and threatening to break the benches. The manager raised the curtain, hoping that Bocage, when driven to bay, would be compelled to come upon the stage. But Bocage sent the manager about his business. Meanwhile, Dorval waited in her chair, with her arms hung down, and head lying back. The audience waited, too, in profound silence; but, when they saw that Bocage was not coming back, they began cheering and calling their hardest. Dorval felt that the atmosphere was becoming stormy, and raised her stiff arms, lifted her bent head, rose, walked to the footlights, and, in the midst of the silence which had settled

down miraculously, at the first movement she had ventured to make:

"*Messieurs*," she said, "*Messieurs, je lui résistais, il m'a assassinée!*" Then she made a graceful obeisance and left the stage, hailed by thunders of applause. The curtain fell and the spectators went away enchanted. They had had their *denoûment*, with a variation, it is true; but this variation was so clever, that one would have had to be very ill-natured not to prefer it to the original form.

CHAPTER VI

The inspiration under which I composed *Antony*—The Preface—Wherein lies the moral of the piece—Cuckoldom, Adultery and the Civil Code—*Quem nuptiæ demonstrant*—Why the Critics exclaimed that my Drama was immoral—Account given by the least malevolent among them—How prejudices against bastardy are overcome

ANTONY has given rise to so many controversies, that I must ask permission not to leave the subject thus; moreover, this work is not merely the most original and characteristic of all my works, but it is one of those rare creations which influences its age. When I wrote *Antony*, I was in love with a woman of whom, although far from beautiful, I was horribly jealous; jealous because she was placed in the same position as Adèle; her husband was an officer in the army; and the fiercest jealousy that a man can feel is that roused by the existence of a husband, seeing that one has no grounds for quarrelling with a woman who possesses a husband, however jealous one may be of him. One day she received a letter from her husband announcing his return. I almost went mad. I went to one of my friends employed in the War Office; three times the leave of absence, which was ready to be sent off, disappeared; it was either torn up or burnt by him. The husband did not return. What I suffered during that time of suspense, I could not attempt to describe, although twenty-four years have passed over, since that love departed the way of the poet Villon's "old moons." But read *Antony*: that will tell you what I suffered!

Antony is not a drama, nor a tragedy! not even a theatrical piece; *Antony* is a description of love, of jealousy and of anger, in five acts. Antony was myself, leaving out the assassination,

and Adèle was my mistress, leaving out the flight. Therefore, I took Byron's words for my epigram, "*People said Childe Harold was myself . . . it does not matter if they did!*" I put the following verses as my preface; they are not very good; I could improve them now: but I shall do nothing of the kind, they would lose their flavour. Poor as they are, they depict two things well enough: the feverish time at which they were composed and the disordered state of my heart at that period.

"Que de fois tu m'as dit, aux heures du délire,
Quand mon front tout à coup devenait soucieux:
'Sur ta bouche pourquoi cet effrayant sourire?
Pourquoi ces larmes dans tes yeux?'

Pourquoi? C'est que mon cœur, au milieu des délices,
D'un souvenir jaloux constamment oppressé,
Froid au bonheur présent, va chercher ses supplices
Dans l'avenir et le passé!

Jusque dans tes baisers je retrouve des peines,
Tu m'accables d'amour! . . . L'amour, je m'en souviens,
Pour la première fois s'est glissé dans tes veines
Sous d'autres baisers que les miens!

Du feu des voluptés vainement tu m'enivres!
Combien, pour un beau jour, de tristes lendemains!
Ces charmes qu'à mes mains, en palpitant, tu livres,
Palpiteront sous d'autres mains!

Et je ne pourrai pas, dans ma fureur jalouse,
De l'infidélité te réserver le prix;
Quelques mots à l'autel t'ont faite son épouse,
Et te sauvent de mon mépris.

Car ces mots pour toujours ont vendu tes caresses;
L'amour ne les doit plus donner ni recevoir;
L'usage des époux à réglé les tendresses,
Et leurs baisers sont un devoir.

Malheur, malheur à moi, que le ciel, en ce monde,
A jeté comme un hôte à ses lois étranger!
A moi qui ne sais pas, dans ma douleur profonde,
Souffrir longtemps sans me venger!

Malheur ! car une voix qui n'a rien de la terre
M'a dit : 'Pour ton bonheur, c'est sa mort qu'il te faut ?'
Et cette voix m'a fait comprendre le mystère
Et du meurtre et de l'échafaud. . . .

Viens donc, ange du mal, dont la voix me convie,
Car il est des instants où, si je te voyais,
Je pourrais, pour son sang, t'abandonner ma vie
Et mon âme . . . si j'y croyais !"

What do you think of my lines? They are impious, blasphemous and atheistic, and, in fact, I will proclaim it, as I copy them here nearly a quarter of a century after they were made, they would be inexcusably poor if they had been written in cold blood. But they were written at a time of passion, at one of those crises when a man feels driven to give utterance to his sorrows, and to describe his sufferings in another language than his ordinary speech. Therefore, I hope they may earn the indulgence of both poets and philosophers.

Now, was *Antony* really as immoral a work as certain of the papers made out? No; for, in all things, says an old French proverb (and, since the days of Sancho Panza, we know that proverbs contain the wisdom of nations), we must see the end first before passing judgment. Now, this is how *Antony* ends. Antony is engaged in a guilty intrigue, is carried away by an adulterous passion, and kills his mistress to save her honour as a wife, and dies afterwards on the scaffold, or at least is sent to the galleys for the rest of his days. Very well, I ask you, are there many young society people who would be disposed to fling themselves into a sinful intrigue, to enter upon an adulterous passion,—to become, in short, Antonys and Adèles, with the prospect in view, at the end of their passion and romance, of death for the woman and of the galleys for the man? People will answer me, that it is the form in which it is put that is dangerous, that Antony makes murder admirable, and Adèle justifies adultery.

But what would you have! I cannot make my lovers hideous in character, unsightly in looks and repulsive in manners. The love-making between Quasimodo and Locuste

would not be listened to beyond the third scene! Take Molière for instance. Does not Angélique betray Georges Dandin in a delightful way? And Valère steal from his father in a charming fashion? And Don Juan deceive Doña Elvire in the most seductive of language? Ah! Molière knew as well as the moderns what adultery was! He died from its effects. What broke his heart, the heart which stopped beating at the age of fifty-three? The smiles given to the young Baron by la Béjart, her ogling looks at M. de Lauzun, a letter addressed by her to a third lover and found the morning of that ill-fated representation of the *Malade imaginaire* which Molière could scarcely finish! It is true that, in Molière's time, it was called cuckoldry and made fun of; that nowadays, we style it adultery, and weep over it. Why was it called cuckoldry in the seventeenth century and adultery in the nineteenth? I will tell you. Because, in the seventeenth century, the Civil Code had not been invented. The Civil Code? What has that to do with it? You shall see. In the seventeenth century there existed the rights of primogeniture, seniority, trusteeship and of entail; and the oldest son inherited the name, title and fortune; the other sons were either made M. le Chevalier or M. le Mousquetaire or M. l'Abbé, as the case might be. They decorated the first with the Malta Cross, the second they decked out in a helmet with buffalo tails, they endowed the third with a clerical collar. While, as for the daughters, they did not trouble at all about them; they married whom they liked if they were pretty, and anybody who would have them if they were plain. For those who either would not or could not be married there remained the convent, that vast sepulchre for aching hearts. Now, although three-quarters of the marriages were *mariages de convenance*, and contracted between people who scarcely knew each other, the husband was nearly always sure that his first male child was his own. This first male child secured,—that is to say, the son to inherit his name, title and fortune, when begotten by him,—what did it matter who was the father of M. le Chevalier, M. le Mousquetaire or M. l'Abbé? It was all the same to him, and often

he did not even inquire into the matter! Look, for example, at the anecdote of Saint-Simon and of M. de Mortemart.

But in our days, alas, it is very different! The law has abolished the right of primogeniture; the Code forbids seniorities, entail and trusteeships. Fortunes are divided equally between the children; even daughters are not left out, but have the same right as sons to the paternal inheritance. Now, from the moment that the *quem nuptiæ demonstrant* knows that children born during wedlock will share his fortune in equal portions, he takes care those children shall be his own; for a child, not his, sharing with his legitimate heirs, is simply a thief. And this is the reason why adultery is a crime in the nineteenth century, and why cuckoldom was only treated as a joke in the seventeenth.

Now, what is the reason that people do not exclaim at the immorality of Angélique, who betrays Georges Dandin, of Valère who robs his papa, of Don Juan who deceives Charlotte, Mathurine and Doña Elvire all at the same time? Because all those characters—Georges Dandin, Harpagon, Don Carlos, Don Alonzo and Pierrot—lived two or three centuries before us, and did not talk as we do, nor were dressed as we dress; because they wore breeches, jerkins, cloaks and plumed hats, so that we do not recognise ourselves in them. But directly a modern author, more bold than others, takes manners as they actually are, passion as it really is, crime from its secret hiding-places and presents them upon the stage in white ties, black coats, and trousers with straps and patent leather boots—ah! each one sees himself as in a mirror, and sneers instead of laughing, attacks instead of approving, groans instead of applauding. Had I put Adèle into a dress of the time of Isabella of Bavaria and Antony into a doublet of the time of Louis d'Orléans, and if I had even made the adultery between brother-in-law and sister-in-law, nobody would have objected. What critic dreams of calling Œdipus immoral, who kills his father and marries his mother, whose children are his sons, grandson and brothers all at the same time, and ends by putting out his own eyes to punish himself, a futile

action, since the whole thing was looked upon as the work of fate? Not a single one! But would any poor devil be so silly as to recognise a likeness of himself under either a Grecian cloak or a Theban tunic? I would, indeed, like to have the opinion of some of the moralists of the Press who condemned *Antony*; that, for instance of M. —— who, at that time, was living openly with Madame —— (I nearly said who). If I put it before my readers, the revelation would not fail to interest them. I can only lay my hands on one article; true, I am at Brussels and write these lines after two in the morning. I exhume that article from a very honest and innocent book—the *Annuaire historique et universel* by M. Charles Louis-Lesur. Here it is—it is one of the least bitter of the criticisms.

"*Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin* (3 May).

"*First performance of Antony, a drama in five acts by M. Alexandre Dumas.*

"In an age and in a country where bastardy would be a stain bearing the stamp of the law, sanctioned by custom and a real social curse, against which a man, however rich in talent, honours and fortune would struggle in vain, the moral aim of the drama of *Antony* could easily be explained; but, nowadays when, as in France, *all special privileges of birth are done away with*, those of plebeian as well as of illegitimate origin, why this passionate pleading, to which, necessarily, there cannot be any contradiction and reply? Moral aim being altogether non-existent in *Antony*, what else is there in the work? Only the frenzied portrayal of an adulterous passion, which stops at nothing to satisfy itself, which plays with dangers and murder and death."

Then follows an unamiable analysis of the piece and the criticism continues—

"Such a conception no more bears the scrutiny of good common sense than a crime brought before the Assize-courts can sustain the scrutiny of a jury. The author, by placing himself in an unusual situation of ungovernable and cruel passions, which spare neither tears nor blood, removes himself

outside the pale of literature; his work is a monstrosity, although we ought in fairness to say that some parts are depicted with an uncommon degree of strength, grace and beauty. Bocage and Madame Dorval distinguished themselves by the talent and energy with which they played the two leading parts of Antony and Adèle."

My dear Monsieur Lesur, I could answer your criticism from beginning to end; but I will only reply to the statements I have underlined, which refer to bastardy, with which you start your article. Well, dear sir, you are wrong; privileges of birth are by no means overcome, as you said. I myself know and you also knew,—I say *you knew*, because I believe you are dead,—you, a talented man—nay, even more, a man of genius, who had a hard struggle to make your fortune, and who, in spite of talent, genius, fortune, were constantly reproached with the fatal accident of your birth. People cavilled over your age, your name, your social status . . . Where? Why, in that inner circle where laws are made, and where, consequently, they ought not to have forgotten that the law proclaims the equality of the French people one with another. Well! that man, with the marvellous persistence which characterises him, will gain his object: he will be a Minister one day. Well, at that day what will they attack in him?—His opinions, schemes, Utopian ideas? Not at all, only his birth!—And who will attack it?—Some mean rascal who has the good luck to possess a father and a mother, who, unfortunately, have reason to blush for him!

But enough about *Antony*, which we will leave, to continue its run of a hundred performances in the midst of the political disturbances outside; and let us return to the events which caused these disturbances.

CHAPTER VII

A word on criticism—Molière estimated by Bossuet, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and by Bourdaloue—An anonymous libel—Critics of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries—M. François de Salignac de la Motte de Fénelon—Origin of the word *Tartuffe*—M. Taschereau and M. Étienne

MAN proposes and God disposes. We ended our last chapter with the intention of going back to political events; but, behold, since we have been talking of criticism, we are seized with the desire to dedicate a whole short chapter to the worthy goddess. There will, however, be no hatred nor recrimination in it. We are only incited with the desire to wander aside for a brief space, and to place before our readers opinions which are either unknown to them or else forgotten. The following, for instance, was written about Molière's comedies generally:—

"We must, then, make allowances for the impieties and infamous doings with which Molière's comedies are packed, as honestly meant; or we may not put on a level with the pieces of to-day those of an author who has declined, as it were, before our very eyes and who even yet fills all our theatres with the coarsest jokes which ever contaminated Christian ears. Think, whether you would be so bold, nowadays, as openly to defend pieces wherein virtue and piety are always ridiculed, corruption ever excused and always treated as a joke.

"Posterity may, perhaps, see entire oblivion cover the works of that poet-actor, who, whilst acting his *Malade imaginaire*, was attacked by the last agonies of the disease of which he died a few hours later, passing away from the jesting of the stage, amidst which he breathed almost his last sigh, to the tribunal of One who said, *Woe to ye who laugh, for ye shall weep'!*"

By whom do you suppose this diatribe against one whom modern criticism styles *the great moralist* was written? By some Geoffroy or Charles Maurice of the day? Indeed! well you are wrong: it was by the eagle of Meaux, M. de Bossuet.[1] Now listen to what is said about *Georges Dandin*:

"See how, to multiply his jokes, this man disturbs the whole order of society! With what scandals does he upheave the most sacred relations on which it is founded! How he turns to ridicule the venerable rights of fathers over their children, of husbands over their wives, masters over their servants! He makes one laugh; true, but he is all the more to be blamed for compelling, by his invincible charm, even wise persons to listen to his sneers, which ought only to rouse their indignation. I have heard it said that he attacks vices; but I would far rather people compared those which he attacks with those he favours. Which is the criminal? A peasant who is fool enough to marry a young lady, or a wife who tries to bring dishonour upon her husband? What can we think of a piece when the pit applauds infidelity, lies, impudence, and laughs at the stupidity of the punished rustic."

By whom was that criticism penned? Doubtless by some intolerant priest, or fanatical prelate? By no means. It was by the author of the *Confessions* and of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau![2] Perhaps the *Misanthrope*, at any rate, may find favour with the critics. It is surely admitted, is it not, that this play is a masterpiece? Let us see what the unctuous Bourdaloue says about it, in his *Lettre à l'Académie Française*. It is short, but to the point.

"Another fault in Molière that many clever people forgive in him, but which I have not allowed myself to forgive, is that he makes vice fascinating and virtue ridiculously rigid and odious!"

Let us pass on to *l'Avare*, and return to Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

"It is a great vice to be a miser and to lend upon usury,

[1] *Maximes et Réflexions sur la comédie.*

[2] *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles.*

said the Genevan philosopher, but is it not a still greater for a son to rob his father, to be wanting in respect to him, to insult him with innumerable reproaches and, when the annoyed father curses him, to answer in a bantering way, '*Qu'il n'a que faire de ses dons.*' 'I have no use for your gifts.' If the joke is a good one, is it, therefore, any the less deserving of censure? And is not a piece which makes the audience like an insolent son a bad school for manners?"[1]

Let us take a sample from an anonymous critic: *Don Juan* and *Tartuffe*, this time; then, after that, we will return to a well-known name, to a poet still cutting his milk teeth and to a golden-mouthed orator. We will begin by the anonymous writer. Note that the precept of Horace was still in vogue at this time: *Sugar the rim of the cup to make the drink less bitter*!

"I hope," said the critic, "that Molière will receive these observations the more willingly because passion and interest have no share in them: I have no desire to hurt him, but only to be of use to him."

Good! so much for the sugaring the rim of the cup; the absinthe is to come, and, after the absinthe, the dregs. Let us continue:

"We have no grudge against him personally, but we object to his atheism; we are not envious of his gain or of his reputation; it is for no private reasons, but on behalf of all right-thinking people; and he must not take it amiss if we openly defend the interests of God, which he so openly attacks, or because a Christian sorrowfully testifies when he sees the theatre in rebellion against the Church, comedy in arms against the Gospel, a comedian who makes game of mysteries and fun of all that is most sacred and holy in religion!

"It is true that there are some fine passages in Molière's works, and I should be very sorry to rob him of the admiration he has earned. It must be admitted that, if he succeeds but ill in comedy, he has some talent in farce; and, although he has neither the witty skill of Gauthier-Garguille, nor the impromptu touches of Turlupin, nor the power of Capitan, nor the naïveté of Jodelet, nor the retort of Gros-Guillaume, nor the science of Docteur, he does not fail to please at times, and to

[1] *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles.*

amuse in his own way. He speaks French passably well; he translates Italian fairly, and does not err deeply in copying other authors; but he does not pretend to have the gift of invention or a genius for poetry. Things that make one laugh when said often look silly on paper, and we might compare his comedies with those women who look perfect frights in undress, but who manage to please when they are dressed up, or with those tiny figures which, having left off their high-heeled shoes, look only half-sized. At the same time, we must not deny that Molière is either very unfortunate or very clever in managing to pass off his false coin successfully, and to dupe the whole of Paris with his poor pieces. Those, in short, are the best and most favourable things we can say for Molière.

"If that author had set forth only affected characterisations, and had stuck entirely to doublets and large frills, he would not have brought upon himself any public censure and he would not have roused the indignation of every religious-minded person. But who can stand the boldness of a farce-writer who makes jokes at religion, who upholds a school of libertinism, and who treats the majesty of God as the plaything of a stage-manager or a call-boy. To do so would be to betray the cause of religion openly at a time when its glory is publicly attacked and when faith is exposed to the insults of a buffoon who trades on its mysteries and profanes its holy things; who confounds and upsets the very foundations of religion in the heart of the Louvre, in the home of a Christian prince, before wise magistrates zealous in God's cause, holding up to derision numberless good pastors as no better than Tartuffes! And this under the reign of the greatest, the most religious monarch in the world, whilst that gracious prince is exerting every effort to uphold the religion that Molière labours to destroy! The king destroys temples of heresy, whilst Molière is raising altars to atheism, and the more the prince's virtue strives to establish in the hearts of his subjects the worship of the true God, by the example of his own acts, so much the more does Molière's libertine humour try to ruin faith in people's minds by the license of his works.

"Surely it must be confessed that Molière himself is a finished Tartuffe, a veritable hypocrite! If the true object of comedy is to correct men's faults while amusing them, Molière's plan is to send them laughing to perdition. Like those snakes the poison of whose deadly bite sends a false gleam of pleasure

across the face of its victim, it is an instrument of the devil; it turns both heaven and hell to ridicule; it traduces religion, under the name of hypocrisy; it lays the blame on God, and brags of its impious doings before the whole world! After spreading through people's minds deadly poisons which stifle modesty and shame, after taking care to teach women to become coquettes and giving girls dangerous counsel, after producing schools notoriously impure, and establishing others for licentiousness—then, when it has shocked all religious feeling, and caused all right-minded people to look askance at it, it composes its *Tartuffe* with the idea of making pious people appear ridiculous and hypocritical. It is indeed all very well for Molière to talk of religion, with which he had little to do, and of which he knew neither the practice nor the theory.

"His avarice contributes not a little to the incitement of his animus against religion; he is aware that forbidden things excite desire, and he openly sacrifices all the duties of piety to his own interests; it is that which makes him lay bold hands on the sanctuary, and he has no shame in wearing out the patience of a great queen who is continually striving to reform or to suppress his works.

"Augustus put a clown to death for sneering at Jupiter, and forbade women to be present at his comedies, which were more decent than were those of Molière. Theodosius flung to the wild beasts those scoffers who turned religious ceremonies into derision, and yet even their acts did not approach Molière's violent outbursts against religion. He should pause and consider the extreme danger of playing with God; that impiety never remains unpunished; and that if it escapes the fires of this earth it cannot escape those of the next world. No one should abuse the kindness of a great prince, nor the piety of a religious queen at whose expense he lives and whose feelings he glories in outraging. It is known that he boasts loudly that he means to play his *Tartuffe* in one way or another, and that the displeasure the great queen has signified at this has not made any impression upon him, nor put any limits to his insolence. But if he had any shadow of modesty left would he not be sorry to be the butt of all good people, to pass for a libertine in the minds of preachers, to hear every tongue animated by the Holy Spirit publicly condemn his blasphemy? Finally, I do not think that I shall be putting forth too bold a judgment in stating that no man, however ignorant in matters of faith,

knowing the content of that play, could maintain that Molière, *in the capacity of its author*, is worthy to participate in the Sacraments, or that he should receive absolution without a public separation, or that he is even fit to enter churches, after the anathemas that the council have fulminated against authors of imprudent and sacrilegious spectacles!"

Do you not observe, dear reader, that this anonymous libel, addressed to King Louis XIV. in order to prevent the performance of *Tartuffe*, is very similar to the petition addressed to King Charles X. in order to hinder the performance of *Henri III.*? except that the author or authors of that seventeenth century libel had the modesty to preserve their anonymity, whilst the illustrious Academicians of the nineteenth boldly signed their names: Viennet, Lemercier, Arnault, Étienne Jay, Jouy and Onésime Leroy. M. Onésime Leroy was not a member of the Academy, but he was very anxious to be one! Why he is not is a question I defy any one to answer. These insults were at any rate from contemporaries and can be undestood; but Bossuet, who wrote ten years after the death of Molière; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who wrote eighty years after the production of *Tartuffe*; and Bourdaloue and Fénelon . . . Ah! I must really tell you what Fénelon thought of the author of the *Précieuses ridicules*. After the Eagle of Meaux, let us have the Swan of Cambrai! There are no fiercer creatures when they are angered than woolly fleeced sheep or white-plumed birds!

"Although Molière thought rightly he often expressed himself badly; he made use of the most strained and unnatural phrases. Terence said in four or five words, and with the most exquisite simplicity, what it took Molière a multitude of metaphors approaching to nonsense to say. *I much prefer his prose to his poetry.* For example, *l'Avare* is less badly written than the plays which are in verse; but, taken altogether, it seems to me, that even in his prose, he does not speak in simple enough language to express all passions."

Remark that this was written twenty years after the death of Molière, and that Fénelon, the author of *Télémaque*, in speak-

ing to the Academy, which applauded with those noddings of the head which did not hinder their naps, boldly declared that the author of the *Misanthrope*, of *Tartuffe* and of the *Femmes Savants* did not know how to write in verse. O my dear Monsieur François de Salignac de la Motte de Fénelon, if I but had here a certain criticism that Charles Fourier wrote upon your *Télémaque*, how I should entertain my reader! In the meantime, the man whom seventeenth and eighteenth century criticism, whom ecclesiastics and philosophers, Bossuet and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, treated as heretical, a corrupter and an abomination; who, according to the anonymous writer of the letter to the king, *spoke French passably well*; who, according to Fénelon *did not know how to write in verse*—that man, in the nineteenth century, is considered a great moralist, a stern corrector of manners, an inimitable writer!

Yet more: men who, in their turn, write letters to the descendant of Louis XIV., in order to stop the heretics, corrupters of morals, abominable men of the nineteenth century from having their works played, grovel on their knees before the illustrious dead; they search his works for the slenderest motives he might have had or did not have, in writing them; they poke about to discover what he could have meant by such and such a thing, when he was merely giving to the world the fruits of such inspiration as only genius possesses; they even indulge in profound researches concerning the man who furnished the type for *Tartuffe* and into the circumstances which gave him the name of *Tartuffe* (so admirably appropriate to that personage, that it has become not only the name of a man, but the name of *men*).

"We have pointed out where Molière got his model; it now remains to us to discuss the origin of the title of his play. To trace the derivation of a word might seem going into unnecessary detail in any other case; *but nothing which concerns the masterpiece of our stage should be devoid of interest.* Several commentators, among others Bret, have contended that Molière, busy over the work he was meditating, one day

happened to be at the house of the Papal Nuncio where many saintly persons were gathered. A truffle-seller came to the door and the smell of his wares wafted in, whereupon the sanctimonious contrite expression on the faces of the courtiers of the ambassador of Rome lit up with animation, 'TARTUFOLI, *Signor Nunzio*! TARTUFOLI!' they exclaimed, pointing out the best to him. According to this version, it was the word *tartufoli*, pronounced with earthly sensuality by the lips of mystics, which suggested to Molière the name of his impostor. We were the first to dispute that fable and we quote below the opinion of one of the most distinguished of literary men, who did us the honour of adopting our opinion.

"In the time of Molière, the word *truffer* was generally used for tromper (*i.e.* to deceive), from which the word *truffe* was taken, a word eminently suitable to the kind of eatable it describes, because of the difficulty there is in finding it. Now, it is quite certain that, formerly, people used the words *truffe* and *tartuffe* indiscriminately, for we find it in an old French translation of the treatise by Platina, entitled *De honestâ voluptate*, printed in Paris in 1505, and quoted by le Duchat, in his edition of Méntage's *Dictionnaire Étymologique*. One of the chapters in Book IX. of this treatise is entitled, *Des truffes ou tartuffes*, and as le Duchat and other etymologists look upon the word *truffe* as derived from *truffer*, it is probable that people said *tartuffe* for *truffe* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, just as they could equally say *tartuffer* for *truffer*."

That is by M. Taschereau, whose opinion, let us hasten to say, is worth nothing in the letter to Charles X., but which is of great weight in the fine study he has published upon Molière. But here is what M. Étienne says, the author of *Deux Gendres*, a comedy made in collaboration with Shakespeare and the Jesuit Conaxa:

"The word *truffes*, says M. Étienne, of the French Academy, comes, then, from *tartufferie*, and perhaps it is not because they are difficult to find that this name was given them but because they are a powerful means of seduction, and the object of seduction is deception. Thus, in accordance with an ancient tradition, great dinner-parties, which exercise to-day such a profound influence in affairs of State, should be com-

posed of Tartuffes. There are many more irrational derivations than this."

Really, my critical friend, or, rather, my enemy—would it not be better if you were a little less flattering to the dead and a little more tolerant towards the living? You would not then have on your conscience the suicide of Escousse, and of Lebras, the drowning of Gros and the *suspension* of *Antony*.

CHAPTER VIII

Thermometer of Social Crises—Interview with M. Thiers—His intentions with regard to the Théâtre-Français—Our conventions—*Antony* comes back to the rue de Richelieu—*The Constitutionnel*—Its leader against Romanticism in general, and against my drama in particular—Morality of the ancient theatre—Parallel between the Théâtre-Français and that of the Porte-Saint-Martin—First suspension of *Antony*

THE last chapter ended with these words: "And the suspension of *Antony*." What suspension? my reader may, perhaps, ask: that ordered by M. Thiers? or the one confirmed by M. Duchâtel? or that which M. de Persigny had just ordered? *Antony*, as M. Lesur aptly put it, is an abnormal being—*un monstre*; it was created in one of those crises of extravagant emotion which ensue after revolutions, when that moral institution called the censorship had not yet had time to be settled and in working order; so that whenever society was being shaken to its foundations, *Antony* was played; but directly society was settled, and stocks went up and morality triumphed, *Antony* was suppressed. I had taken advantage of the moment when society was topsy-turvy to get *Antony* put on the stage, as I was wise; for, if I had not done so, the moral government which was crucified between the Cubières trial and the Praslin assassination would, most certainly, never have allowed the representation.

But *Antony* had been played thirty times; *Antony* had acclimatised itself; it had made its mark and done its worst, and there did not seem to be any reason to be anxious, until M. Thiers summoned me one morning to the Home Office. M. Thiers is a delightful man; I have known few

more agreeable talkers and few listeners as intelligent. We had seen each other many times, and, furthermore, he and I understood one another, because "he was he and I was I."

"My dear poet," he said to me, "have you noticed something?"

"What, my dear historian?"

"That the Théâtre-Français is going to the devil?"

"Surely that is no news?"

"No, I mention it merely as a misfortune."

"Pooh! . . ."

"What do you advise in the case of the Théâtre-Français?"

"What one applies to an old structure—a pontoon."

"Good! Do you believe, then, that it can no longer stand against the sea?"

"Oh! certainly, with a new keel, new sails and a different gear."

"Exactly my own opinion: it reminds me of the horse which, in his madness, Roland dragged by the bridle; it had all the attributes of a horse, only, all these attributes were useless on account of one small misfortune: it was dead!"

"Precisely the case."

"Well, Hugo and you have been very successful at the Porte-Saint-Martin; and I want to do at the Théâtre-Français what they have done at the Musée: to open it on Sunday to enable people to come there to see and study the works of dead authors, and to reserve all the rest of the week for living authors and for Hugo and you specially."

"Well, my dear historian, that is the first time I have heard a Home Minister say anything sensible upon a question of art. Let me note the time of day and the date of the month, I must keep it by me . . . 15 March 1834, at seven a.m."

"Now, what would you want for a comedy, a tragedy, or a drama of five acts at the Théâtre-Français?"

"I should first of all need actors who can act drama: Madame Dorval, Bocage, Frédérick."

"You cannot have everything at once. I will allow you Madame Dorval; the others must come afterwards."

"All right! that is something at all events . . . Then I must have some reparation in respect of *Antony*. Therefore I desire that Madame Dorval shall resume her rôle of Adèle."

"Granted . . . what else?"

"That is all."

"Oh, you must give us a fresh piece."

"In three months' time."

"On what terms?"

"Why on the usual terms."

"There I join issue: they will give you five thousand francs down!"

"Ah! five thousand francs!"

"Well, I will approach Jouslin de la Salle . . . and you shall approach Madame Dorval; only, tell her to be reasonable."

"Oh! never fear! to act at the Français and to play *Antony* there, she would make any sacrifices . . . Then, it is settled?"

"Yes."

"Let us repeat the terms."

"Very good."

"Hugo and I are to enter the Théâtre-Français by a breach, as did M. de Richelieu's litter."

"Exactly."

"We are each to write two pieces a year . . .?"

"Agreed."

"Dorval is engaged? Bocage and Frédérick shall be later?"

"Granted."

"And Dorval shall make her début in *Antony*?"

"She shall have that specified in her agreement."

"Excellent! . . . Here's to the first night of the revival of that immoral play!"

"To-day I will engage my box in order to secure a place."

We parted and I ran to Madame Dorval's house to announce this good news. She had not been re-engaged at the Porte-

Saint-Martin; she was, therefore, free and could go to the Théâtre-Français without delay. The following day she received a call from Jouslin de la Salle. The terms did not take long to discuss; for, as I had said, to be engaged at the Théâtre-Français, and to play *Antony* there, Dorval would have engaged herself for nothing. The rehearsals began immediately. I had signed my contract with the manager, and it was specified in this contract that, by order of the government, *Antony* was revived at the Comédie-Française, and that Dorval was to make her début in that drama. *Antony* re-appeared on the bills in the rue de Richelieu; and, this time, the odds were a hundred to one that it would be performed, since it was to re-appear under Government commands. The bill announced the piece and Dorval's appearance for 28 April 1834. But we were reckoning without *The Constitutionnel*. That paper had an old grudge against me, concerning which I did not trouble myself much: I thought it could no longer bite. I was the first who had dared,—in this very *Antony*,—to attack its omnipotence.

It will be remembered that, in *Antony*, there is a stout gentleman, who, no matter what was said to him, invariably answered, "Nevertheless, monsieur, *The Constitutionnel* . . ." without ever giving any other reason. Moessard acted this stout gentleman. That was not all. A piece called *la Tour de Babel* had been produced at the Variétés. The scene that was the cause of scandal in that play was the one where subscription to *The Constitutionnel* is discontinued, which they naturally laid at my door, on account of my well-known dislike of that journal. I had not denied it, and I was, if not the actual father, at least the putative sire.

On the morning of 28 April 1834, as I had just done distributing my tickets for the performance that night, my son, who had just turned ten, came to me with a number of *The Constitutionnel* in his hands. He had been sent to me by Goubaux, with whom he was at school, and who cried out to me, like Assas, *A vous! c'est l'ennemi!* "To

arms! the enemy is upon you!" I unfolded the estimable paper and read,—in the leading article if you please,—the following words. A literary event was thus considered as important as a political one.

"PARIS, 28 *April* 1834

"The Théâtre-Français is subsidised by the State Budget to the amount of two hundred thousand francs. It is a considerable sum; but, if we reflect upon the influence which that theatre must exercise, in the interests of society, in the matter of taste and manners, and its influence on good dramatic literature, the grant does not seem too large. The Théâtre-Français, enriched by many *chefs-d'œuvre* which have contributed to the progress of our civilisation is, like the Musée, a national institution which should neither be neglected nor degraded. It ought not to descend from the height to which the genius of our great authors has lifted it, to those grotesque and immoral exhibitions that are the disgrace of our age, alarming public modesty and spreading deadly poison through society! There is no longer any curb put to the depravity of the stage, on which all morality and all decorum is forgotten; violation, adultery, incest, crime in their most revolting forms, are the elements of the poetry of this wretched dramatic period, which, deserving of all scorn, tries to set at nought the great masters of art, and takes a fiendish pleasure in blasting every noble sentiment, in order to spread corruption among the people, and expose us to the scorn of other nations!"

This is well written, is it not? True, it is written by an Academician. I will proceed—

"Public money is not intended for the encouragement of a pernicious system. The sum of two hundred thousand francs is only granted to the Théâtre-Français on condition that it shall keep itself pure from all defilement, that the artistes connected with that theatre, who are still the best in Europe, shall not debase themselves by lending the support of their talent to those works which are unworthy to be put on the national stage, works the disastrous tendency of which should arouse the anxiety of the Government, for it is responsible for public morality as well as for the carrying out of laws. Well, who would believe it? At this very moment the principal actors of the Porte-Saint-Martin are being transferred to the

Théâtre-Français, and silly and dirty melodramas are to be naturalised there, in order to replace the dramatic master-pieces which form an important part of our glorious literature. A plague of blindness appears to have afflicted this unhappy theatre. The production of *Antony* is officially announced by *The Moniteur* for to-morrow, Monday: *Antony*, the most brazenly obscene play which has appeared in these obscene times! *Antony*, at the first appearance of which respectable fathers of families exclaimed, 'For a long time we have not been able to take our daughters to the theatre; now, we can no longer take our wives!' So we are going to see at the theatre of Corneille, Racine, Molière and Voltaire, a woman flung into an alcove with her mouth gagged; we are to witness violation itself on the national stage: the day of this representation is fixed. What a school of morality to open to the public; what a spectacle to which to invite the youth of the country; you boast that you are elevating them, but they will soon recognise neither rule nor control! It is not its own fault; but that of superior powers, which take no steps to stem this outbreak of immorality. There is no country in the world, however free, where it is permissible to poison the wells of public morality. In ancient republics, the presentation of a dramatic work was the business of the State; it forbade all that could change the national character, undermine the honour of its laws and outrage public modesty."

Witness the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, of which we wish to say a few words to our readers, taking care, however, to translate into Latin those parts which cannot be reproduced in French.

"Le latin dans les mots brave l'honnèteté!"

It will be seen I quote Boileau when he serves my purpose. Poor Boileau! What a shame for him to be forced to come to the rescue of the author of *Henri III.* and *Antony*!

We are at Athens. The Athenians are at war with the Lacedæmonians; the women are complaining of that interminable Peloponnesian War, which keeps their husbands away from them and prevents them from fulfilling their conjugal duties. The loudest in her complaints is Lysistrata, wife of one of the principal citizens of Athens; so she calls together

all the matrons not only of Athens, but also from Lacedæmon, Anagyrus and Corinth. She has a suggestion to make to them. We will let her speak. She is addressing one of the wives convoked by her, who has come to the place of meeting.[1]

"LISISTRATA.—Salut, Lampito! Lacédémonienne chérie, que tu es belle! Ma douce amie, quel teint frais! quel air de santé! Tu étranglerais un taureau!

"LAMPITO.—Par Castor et Pollux, je le crois bien: je m'exerce au gymnase, et je me frappe du talon dans le derrière."

The dance to which Lampito alludes, with a *naïveté* in keeping with the Doric dialect natural to her, was called *Cibasis*. Let us proceed:

"LISISTRATA, *lui prenant la gorge*.—Que tu as une belle gorge!

"LAMPITO.—Vous me tâtez comme une victime.

"LISISTRATA.—Et cette autre jeune fille, de quel pays est-elle?

"LAMPITO.—C'est une Béotienne des plus nobles qui nous arrive.

"LISISTRATA.—Ah! oui, c'est une Béotienne?.. Elle a un joli jardin!"

That reminds me, I forgot to say—and it was the word *jardin* which reminded me of that omission—that Lampito and Kalonike, the Bœotian, play their parts in the costume Eve wore in the earthly paradise before she sinned.

"CALONICE.—Et parfaitement soigné! on eu a arraché le pouliot."

Here the learned translator informs us that the *pouliot* was a plant which grew in abundance in Bœotia. Then he adds: *Sed intelligit hortum muliebrem undè pilos educere aut evellere solebant.* Lysistrata continues, and lays before the meeting her reason for convening it.

"LISISTRATA.—Ne regrettez-vous pas que les pères de vos enfants soient retenus loin de vous par la guerre? Car je sais que nous avons toutes nos maris absents.

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[1] We have borrowed the following quotations from M. Arland's excellent translation. If we had translated it ourselves, in the first place the translation would be bad, then people might have accused us of straining the Greek to say more than it meant.

"CALONICE.—Le mien est en Thrace depuis cinq mois.

"LISISTRATA.—Le mein est depuis sept mois à Pylos.

"LAMPITO.—Le mien revient à peine de l'armee, qu'il reprend son bouclier, et repart.

"LISISTRATA.—*Sed nec mœchi relicta est scintilla! ex quo enim nos prodiderunt Milesi ne olisbum quidem vidi octo digitos longum, qui nobis esset conâceum auxilium.*"

Poor Lysistrata! One can well understand how a wife in such trouble would put herself at the head of a conspiracy. Now, the conspiracy which Lysistrata proposed to her companions was as follows:

"LISISTRATA.—Il faut nous abstenir des hommes! . . . Pourquai détournez-vous les yeux? ou allez-vous? . . . Pourquoi vous mordre les lèvres, et secouer la tête? Le ferez-vous ou ne le ferez-vous pas? . . . Que décidez-vous?

"MIRRHINE.—Je ne le ferai pas! Que la guerre continue.

"LAMPITO.—Ni moi non plus! Que la guerre continue.

"LISISTRATA.—O sexe dissolu! Je ne m'étonne plus que nous fournissions des sujets de tragédie: nous ne sommes bonnes qu'à une seule chose! . . . O ma chère Lacédémonienne,—car tu peux encore tout sauver en t'unissant à moi,—je tien prie, seconde mes projets!

"LAMPITO.—C'est qu'il est bien difficile pour des femmes de dormir *sine mentula*! Il faut cependant s'y résoudre, car la paix doit passer avant tout.

"LISISTRATA.—La paix, assurément! Si nous nous tenions chez nous bien fardées, et sans autre vêtement qu'une tunique fine et transparente, *incenderemus glabro cunno, arrigerent viri, et coïre cuperent!*"

The wives consent. They decide to bind themselves by an oath. This is the oath:

"LISISTRATA.—Mettez toutes la main sur la coupe, et qu'une seule répète, en votre nom à toutes, ce que je vais vous dire: Aucun amant ni aucun époux. . . .

"MIRRHINE.—Aucun amant ni aucun époux. . . .

"LISISTRATA.—Ne pourra m'approcher *rigente nervo!*—Repète."

Myrrine repeats.

"LISISTRATA.—Et, s'il emploie la violence. . . .

"MIRRHINE.—Oui, s'il emploie la violence. . . .

"LISISTRATA.—*Motus non addam!*"

One can imagine the result of such an oath, which is scrupulously kept.

My readers will remember M. de Pourceaugnac's flight followed by the apothecaries? Well, that will give you some idea of the *mise en scène* of the rest of the piece. The wives play the rôle of M. de Pourceaugnac, and the husbands that of the apothecaries. And that is one of the plays which, according to the author of *Joconde*, gave such a high tone to ancient society! It is very extraordinary that people know Aristophanes so little when they are so well acquainted with Conaxa!

"In the ancient republics," our censor continues with assurance, "spectacular games were intended to excite noble passions, not to excite the vicious leanings of human nature; their object was to correct vice by ridicule, and, by recalling glorious memories, energetically to rouse souls to the emulation of virtue, enthusiasm for liberty and love of their country! Well, we, proud of our equivocal civilisation, have no such exalted thoughts; all we demand is to have at least one single theatre to which we can take our children and wives without their imaginations being contaminated, a theatre which shall be really a school of good taste and manners."

Was it at this theatre that *Joconde* was to be played?

"We do not look for it in the direction of the Beaux-Arts; a romantic coterie, the sworn enemy of our great literature, reigns supreme in that quarter; a coterie which only recognises its own specialists and flatterers and only bestows its favours upon them; an undesigning artiste is forgotten by it. It wants to carry out its own absurd theories: it hunts up from the boulevards its director, its manager, its actors and its plays, which are a disgrace to the French stage: that is its chief object; and those are the methods it employs. We are addressing these remarks to M. Thiers, Minister for Home Affairs, a distinguished man of letters and admirer of those sublime geniuses which are the glory of our country; it is to him, the guardian of a power which should watch over the safety of this noble inheritance, that we appeal to prevent it falling into hostile hands, and to oppose that outburst of evil morals which is invading the theatre, perverting the youth in our colleges, throwing it out upon the world eager for precocious pleasures, impatient of any kind of restraint, and

making it soon tired of life. This disgust with life almost at the beginning of it, this terrible phenomenon hitherto unprecedented, is largely owing to the baneful influence of those dangerous spectacles where the most unbridled passions are exhibited in all their nakedness, and to that new school of literature where everything worthy of respect is scoffed at. To permit this corruption of youth, or rather to foster its corruption, is to prepare a stormy and a troubled future; it is to compromise the cause of Liberty, to poison our growing institutions in the bud; it is, at the same time, the most justifiable and deadly reproach that can be made against a government. . . ."

Poor *Antony*! it only needed now to be accused of having violated the Charter of 1830!

"And we are here stating the whole truth: it is not Republican pamphlets which have lent their support to this odious system of demoralisation; whatever else we may blame them for, we must admit that they have repulsed this Satanic literature and immoral drama with indignation, and have remained faithful to the creed of national honour. It is the journals of the Restoration, it is the despicable management of the Beaux-Arts, which, under the eyes of the Ministry, causes such great scandal to the civilised world: the scandal of contributing to the publicity and success of these monstrous productions, which take us back to barbarous times and which will end, if they are not stopped, in making us blush that we are Frenchmen. . . ."

Can you imagine the author of *Joconde* blushing for being a Frenchman because M. Hugo wrote *Marion Delorme*, and M. Dumas, *Antony*, and compelled to look at *la Colonne* to restore his pride in his own nationality?

"But why put a premium upon depravity? Why encumber the state budget with the sum of 200,000 francs for the encouragement of bad taste and immorality? Why not, at least, divide the sum between the Théâtre-Français and the Porte-Saint-Martin? There would be some justice in that, for their rights are equal; very soon, even the former of these theatres will be but a branch of the other, and this last will indeed deserve all the sympathies of the directors of the *Beaux-Arts*.

It would, then, be shocking negligence on their part to leave it out in the cold."

You are right this time, Monsieur l'Académicien. A subsidy ought to be granted to the theatre which produces literary works which are remembered in following years and remain in the repertory. Now, let us see what pieces were running at the Théâtre Français concurrently with those of the Porte-Saint-Martin, and then tell me which were the pieces during this period of four years which you remember and which remain on its repertory?

THÉÂTRE-FRANÇAIS

Charlotte Corday—Camille Desmoulins, le Clerc et le Théologien—Pierre III.—Le Prince et la Grisette—Le Sophiste—Guido Reni—Le Presbytère—Caïus Gracchus, ou le Sénat et le Peuple—La Conspiration de Cellamare—La Mort de Figaro—Le Marquis de Rieux—Les Dernières Scènes de la Fronde—Mademoiselle de Montmorency.

THÉÂTRE DE LA PORTE-SAINT-MARTIN

Antony—Marion Delorme—Richard Darlington—La Tour de Nesle—Perrinet Leclerc—Lucrèce Borgia—Angèle—Marie Tudor—Catherine Howard.

True, we find, without reckoning *les Enfants d'Edouard* and *Louis XI.* by Casimir Delavigne, *Bertrand et Raton* and *la Passion secrète* by Scribe, who had just protested against that harvest of unknown, forgotten and buried works, flung into the common grave without epitaph to mark their resting-places,—it is true, I say, that we find four or five pieces more at the Théâtre-Français than at the Porte-Saint-Martin; but that does not prove that they played those pieces at the Théâtre-Français for a longer period than those of the Porte-Saint-Martin, especially when we carefully reflect that the Théâtre-Français only plays its new pieces for two nights at a time, and gives each year a hundred and fifty representations of its old standing repertory! You are therefore perfectly correct, *Monsieur*

l'académicien: it was to the Porte-Saint-Martin and not to the Théâtre-Français that the subsidy ought to have been granted, seeing that, with the exception of two or three works, it was at the Porte-Saint-Martin that genuine literature was produced. We will proceed, or, rather, the author of *Joconde* shall proceed:

"If the Chamber of Deputies is not so eager to vote for laws dealing with financial matters, we must hope, that in so serious a matter as this one, so intimately connected with good order and the existence of civilisation, some courageous voice will be raised to protest against such an abusive use of public funds, and to recall the Minister to the duties with which he is charged. The deputy who would thus speak would be sure of a favourable hearing from an assembly, whose members every day testify against the unprecedented license of the theatres, destructive of all morality, and who are perfectly cognisant of all the dangers attached thereto."

But you were a member of the Chamber, illustrious author of *Joconde*! Why did you not take up the matter yourself? Were you afraid, perchance, that they might think you still held, under the sway of the younger branch of the Bourbon family, the position of dramatic critic which you exercised so agreeably under Napoléon?

"We shall return to this subject," continues the ex-dramatic censor, "which seems to us of the highest importance for the peace of mind of private families and of society in general. We have on our side every man of taste, all true friends of our national institutions and, in fact, all respectable persons in all classes of society!"

"Well! That is a polite thing, indeed, to say to the spectators who followed the one hundred and thirty performances of *Antony*, the eighty representations of *Marion Delorme*, the ninety of *Richard Darlington*, the six hundred of *la Tour de Nesle*, the ninety productions of *Perrinet-Leclerc*, the one hundred and twenty of *Lucrèce Borgia*, one hundred of *Angèle*, seventy of *Marie Tudor* and fifty of *Catherine Howard*! What were these people, if your particular specimens are "men

of taste," the "true friends of our national institutions," and "respectable persons"? They must be blackguards, subverters of government, thieves and gallows-birds? The deuce! Take care! For I warn you that the great majority of these people were not only from Paris, but from the provinces. This is how the moralist of the *Constitutionnel* ends:

"We are convinced that even the artistes of the Théâtre-Français, who see with satisfaction the enlightened portion of the public rallying to their side, will decide in favour of the successful efforts of our protests. It will depend on the Chamber and on the Home Minister. Political preoccupations, as is well known, turned his attention from the false and ignoble influences at work at the Théâtre-Français; there is no longer any excuse for him, now that he knows the truth."

ÉTIENNE ["A. JAY"][1]

Perhaps you thought, when you began to read this denunciation, that it was anonymous or signed only with an initial or by a masonic sign, or by two, three or four asterisks? No indeed! It was signed by the name of a man, of a deputy, of a dramatic author, or, thereabouts, of an académicien, M. Étienne! [M. Jay]. Now, the same day that this article appeared, about two in the afternoon, M. Jouslin de Lasalle, director of the Théâtre-Français, received this little note, short but clear.

"The Théâtre-Français is forbidden to play *Antony* to-night.

"THIERS"

I took a cab and gave orders to the driver to take me to the Home Minister.

[1] TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—The Brussels edition gives Étienne; the current Paris edition, A. Jay.

CHAPTER IX

My discussion with M. Thiers—Why he had been compelled to suspend *Antony*—Letter of Madame Dorval to the *Constitutionnel*—M. Jay crowned with roses—My lawsuit with M. Jouslin de Lasalle—There are still judges in Berlin!

AT four o'clock, I got down to the door of the Home Office. I went in at once and reached the Minister's private office, without any obstacle preventing me; the office-boys and ushers who had seen me come there three or four times during the past fortnight, that is to say during the period M. Thiers had been Home Minister, did not even think of asking me where I was going. M. Thiers was at work with his secretary. He was exceedingly busy just at that time; for Paris had only just come out of her troubles of the 13 and 14 April, and the insurrection of the Lyons Mutualists was scarcely over; the budget of trade and of public works was under discussion, for, in spite of a special department, these accounts remained under the care of the Home Office; finally, they were just passing to the general discussion of the Fine Arts, and consequently had entered upon the particular discussion of the subsidising of the Théâtre-Français.

At the noise I made opening the door of his room, M. Thiers raised his head.

"Good!" he said, "I was expecting you."

"I think not," I replied.

"What do you mean?"

"Because, if you had expected me, you would have known my reasons for coming, and would have forbidden my entrance."

"And what are your reasons for coming?"

"I have come simply to ask an explanation of the man who fails to keep his promise as a Minister."

"You do not know, then, what passed in the Chambers?"

"No! I only know what has happened at the Théâtre-Français."

"I was obliged to suspend *Antony*."

"Not to suspend, but to stop it."

"To stop or to suspend. . . ."

"Do not mean the same thing."

"Well, then, I was obliged to stop *Antony*."

"Obliged? A Minister! How could a Minister be obliged to stop a piece which he had himself taken out of the hands of the prompter of another theatre, when, too, he had engaged his own box to see the first representation of that piece?"

"Yes—obliged, I was compelled to do it!"

"By the article in the *Constitutionnel*?"

"Bah! if it had only been that article I should, indeed, have made myself a laughing-stock, although good ink went to the writing of it."

"You call that good ink, do you? I defy you to suck M. Jay's [Étienne's] pen, without having an attack of the colic."

"Well, call it bad ink, if you like . . . But it was the Chamber!"

"How do you make that out?"

"Oh! I had the whole Chamber against me! If *Antony* had been allowed to be played to-night, the Budget would not have passed."

"The Budget would not have passed?"

"No . . . Remember that such people as Jay, Étienne, Viennet and so forth . . . can command a hundred votes in the Chamber, a hundred people who vote like one man. I was pinned into a corner—'*Antony* and no budget!' or, 'A budget and no *Antony*!' . . . Ah! my boy, remain a dramatic author and take good care never to become a Minister!"

"Oh! come! do you really think matters can rest thus?"

"No, I am well aware I owe you an indemnity; fix it yourself and I will pass for payment any sum you may exact!"

"A fig for your indemnity! Do you think I work only to earn indemnities?"

"No, you work to earn author's rights."

"When my pieces are played, not when they are forbidden."

"However, you have a right to compensation."

"The Court will fix that."

"Trust in me and do not have recourse to law-suits."

"Why?"

"Because the same thing will happen to you that happened to Hugo with regard to the *Roi s'amuse*: the tribunal will declare itself incompetent."

"The Government did not interfere with the contract of the *Roi s'amuse*, as you have in the case of *Antony*."

"Indirectly."

"The Court will appreciate that point."

"This will not prevent you from writing a new piece for us."

"Good! So that they may refuse you the budget of 1835? Thanks!"

"You will think better of your determination."

"I? I will never set foot in your offices again!"

And out I went, sulking and growling; which I would certainly not have done had I known that, in less than two years' time, this same Thiers would break his word to Poland, by letting the Austrians, Prussians and Russians occupy Cracow; to Spain, by refusing to intervene; and to Switzerland by threatening to blockade her. What was this paltry little broken promise to a dramatic author in comparison with these three great events?

I rushed to Dorval, whom the ministerial change of front hit more cruelly than it did me. Indeed, *Antony* was only banned by the Théâtre-Français; elsewhere, its reputation was well established, and its revival could not add anything to mine.

But it was different in the case of Dorval: she had never had a part in which she had been so successful as she had been in that of Adèle; none of her old rôles could supply the place of this one, and there was no probability that any new part would give her the chance of success, which the suppression of *Antony* took away from her. She began by writing the following letter to the *Constitutionnel*:—

"Monsieur,—When I was engaged at the Français, it was on the express condition that I should begin in *Antony*. That condition was ratified in my agreement as the basis of the contract into which I entered with the management of the Théâtre Richelieu. Now, the Government decides that the piece received at the Théâtre-Français in 1830, censured under the Bourbons, played a hundred times at the Porte-Saint-Martin, thirty times at the Odéon and once at the Italiens, cannot be acted by the king's comedians. A lawsuit between the author and M. Thiers will settle the question of rights. But, until that law-suit is decided, I feel myself compelled to cease appearing in any other piece. I am anxious, at the same time, to make clear that there is nothing in my refusal which can injure the authors of *une Liaison*, to whom I owe particular thanks for their generous dealings with me.

"Marie Dorval"

This was the serious and sad side to the situation; then, when she had accomplished this duty towards herself,—and especially to her family, of whom she was the only support,—Dorval was desirous of repaying M. Étienne [M. Jay], after her own fashion, not having the least doubt that I should also pay him back in my own way some day or other. I came across the fact that I am going to relate in an album which the poor woman sent me when dying, and which I have tenderly preserved.

"On 28 April 1834, my appearance in *Antony* at the Théâtre-Français was forbidden, at the solicitation, or rather upon the denunciation, of M. Antoine Jay [M. Étienne], author of *Joconde* and editor of the *Constitutionnel*. I conceived the idea of sending him a crown of roses. I put the crown in a card-

board box with a little note tied to it with a white favour. The letter contained these words:

"'MONSIEUR,—Here is a crown which was flung at my feet in *Antony*, allow me to place it on your brow. I owe you that homage.

"'Personne ne sait davantage
Combien vous l'avez mérite!'"

"MARIE DORVAL"

Below the signature of that good and dear friend, I discovered two more lines, and the following letter:—

"M. Jay [M. Étienne] sent back the box, the crown and the white favour with this note—

"'MADAME,—The epigram is charming, and although it is not true it is in such excellent taste that I cannot refrain from appropriating it. As for the crown, it belongs to grace and talent, so I hasten to lay it again at your feet.

"A. JAY [ÉTIENNE]

"30 *April* 1834"

As I had warned M. Thiers I appealed from his decision to the *tribunal de commerce*. The trial was fixed for the 2nd June following. My friend Maître Mermilliod laid claim on my behalf for the representation of *Antony*, or demanded 12,000 francs damages. Maître Nouguier, M. Jouslin de Lasalle's advocate, offered, in the name of his client, to play *Antony*, but on condition that I should produce the leave of the Home Office. Maître Legendre, attorney to the Home Office, disputed the jurisdiction of the tribunal, his plea being that acts of administrative authority could not be brought before a legal tribunal for decision. It was quite simple, as you see: the Government stole my purse; and, when I claimed restitution it said to me "Stop, you scamp! I am too grand a seigneur to be prosecuted!" Happily, the Court did not allow itself to be intimidated by the grand airs of Maître Legendre, and directed that M. Jouslin de Lasalle should appear in person at the bar. The case was put off till the fifteenth. Now I will open the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, and copy from it.

"TRIBUNAL DE COMMERCE DE PARIS

"*Hearing* 30 *June*, 1834

"*President*—M. VASSAL

"M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS *against* JOUSLIN de LASALLE.

"MAÎTRE HENRY NOUGUIER, Counsel for the Comédie Française.

"The Court having directed the parties to come in person to lay their case before it, M. Jouslin de Lasalle only appears out of deference to the court, but protests against that appearance, on the grounds that it will establish a precedent which will lead to M. Jouslin de Lasalle having to appear in person in all disputes which may concern the Comédie-Française, and to reveal his communications with administrative authority; and he leaves the merits of this protest to be decided by reference to previous decisions.

"M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS.—As plaintiff, I plead first, when the Home Ministry formed the plan of regenerating or re-organising the Théâtre-Français, it first of all decided to appoint a good manager and to call in, I will not say authors of talent, but authors who could draw good houses. The intention of the Government was, at first, to begin by re-establishing the old material prosperity of the theatre. It order to attain that end, it was needful that it should have plays in its répertoire which should attract the public and bring in good receipts in addition to the subsidy it proposed to grant. M. Thiers procured an exceedingly clever manager in the person of M. Jouslin de Lasalle. He bethought himself also of me as one enjoying a certain degree of public favour. The Minister, therefore, sent for me to his cabinet, and suggested I should work for the Théâtre-Français, even going so far as to offer me a premium. I asked to be treated like other authors in respect of future plays, and I demanded no other condition before I gave my consent than the promise that three of my old dramas should be played, *Antony*, *Henri III.* and *Christine*. M. Thiers told me he did not know *Antony*, although that drama had been represented eighty times; that he had seen *Christine*, which had given him much pleasure, and that he had even made it the subject of an article when the play appeared. My condition was accepted without any

reservation. Thus, I was in treaty with the Minister before the manager of the Théâtre-Français had an interview with me. M. Jouslin de Lasalle even found me in the office of M. Thiers. The latter indicated the clauses of the contract and charged M. Jouslin to put them down in writing. In conformity with the agreements then arrived at, *Antony* was put in rehearsal and announced in the bills.

"However, in that work, using the liberty of an author, I had rallied the *Constitutionnel* and its old-fashioned doctrines. The *Constitutionnel*, which, before 1830, had been something of a power, took offence at the gibes of a young dramatic author, and, in its wrath, it thundered forth in an article wherein it pretended to show that *Antony* was an immoral production, and that it was scandalous to allow its representation at the leading national theatre. The journal's anger might not, perhaps, have exerted great influence over the Minister for Home Affairs had not MM. Jay and Étienne happened at that time to be concerned with the theatre budget. These worthy deputies, whose collaboration in the *Constitutionnel* is well known, imagined that the epigrams of *Antony* referred to them personally; having this in mind, they informed the Minister that they would cause the theatre budget to be rejected if my satirical play was not prohibited at the Théâtre-Français. *Antony* was to have been played on the very day upon which these threats were addressed to M. Thiers. That Minister sent to M. Jouslin de Lasalle, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the order to stop the representation; I was informed of this interdict some hours later. I knew that M. Jouslin de Lasalle had acted in good faith, and that he had done all that rested with him, concerning the preparation of my play. The injury came from the Government alone, which had placed *Antony* on the Index, without his knowledge, as he himself said before the tribune. That ministerial interdict has been fatal to my interests, for Prefects of the *Departements* have, following in the footsteps of their chief, striven to have my play prohibited. It is no longer even allowed to be played at Valenciennes. M. Jouslin de Lasalle has offered to stage any other play I might choose in place of *Antony*, but that would not be the same thing as the execution of the signed contract; moreover, I cling to the representation of *Antony*, which is my favourite work, and that of many young writers who are good enough to regard me as their representative. Upon the faith of these ministerial

promises, and of the agreement made with M. Jouslin de Lasalle, I withdrew *Antony* forcibly from the repertory of the Porte-Saint-Martin, where it was bringing in large sums. I am thus deprived of my author's rights, which came in daily. It is, consequently, only just that M. Jouslin should compensate me for the harm he has done me by the non-execution of the contract. The Government are sure to provide him with the necessary funds. The private quarrel I had with the *Constitutionnel* ought not to be permitted to cause the manager of the Théâtre-Français, much less the Government, to stop the production of a piece which forms a part of my means of livelihood; that would be nothing short of spoliation. If M. Thiers had not intended to treat with me, he should not have sent for me to call upon him a dozen to fifteen times; he should not have taken upon himself the arrangement of theatrical details which are outside the scope of a Minister. M. Jouslin was evidently but an intermediary.

"M. JOUSLIN DE LASALLE.—I drew up the agreement with M. Alexandre Dumas in my office. The Minister knew I had done so, but he was not acquainted with the details of that contract. I did all in my power to fulfil the compact. The prohibition of the Minister came suddenly without my having received previous notice, and that alone prevented the carrying out of my promise. It was an act of *force majeure* for which I do not hold myself responsible.

"M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS.—Did you not meet me at the Minister's?

"M. JOUSLIN DE LASALLE.—Yes, a fortnight ago.

"MAÎTRE MERMILLIOD.—The Minister knew that *Antony* formed part of Madame Dorval's repertory, and that she was to make her appearance in that piece.

"M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS.—Madame Dorval made it a special stipulation in her engagement.

"M. JOUSLIN DE LASALLE.—Madame Dorval was engaged two or three months before the treaty with M. Alexandre Dumas. No stipulation was then made relative to *Antony*. After the contract with the plaintiff, M. Merle, Madame Dorval's husband, came and begged me to add the clause to which reference has just been made; I did not refuse that act of compliance because I did not foresee that *Antony* was to be forbidden. I added the clause at the foot of the dramatic contract.

"M. Alexandre Dumas.—Had the additional clause any definite date attached?

"M. Jouslin de Lasalle.—No.

"Maître Mermilliod.—M. Jouslin de Lasalle receives a subsidy from the Government, and is in a state of dependence which prevents him from explaining his position openly.

"M. Jouslin de Lasalle.—I am not required to explain my relations with the Government; and it would be unseemly on my part to do so.

"M. le Président.—Are you bound, in consequence of the subsidy you receive, only to play those pieces which suit the Government?

"M. Jouslin de Lasalle.—No obligation of that kind whatever is imposed on me. I enjoy, in that respect, the same liberty that all other managers have; but, like them, I am bound to submit to any prohibitions issued by the state. There is no difference in this respect between my confrères and myself.

"After these explanations, the manager of the Théâtre-Français at once left the Court. The president declared that the Court would adjourn the case for consideration, and that judgment would be pronounced in a fortnight's time."

"*Hearing of* 14 *July*

"The Court taking into consideration the connection between the cases, decides to join them, and gives judgment upon both at one and the same time. Concerning the principal claim: It appearing that, if it had been decided by the Court that the prohibition to produce a piece which was opposed to good manners and public morality, legally made by a competent Minister, might be looked upon as a case of *force majeure*, thus doing away with the right of appeal of the author against the manager, the tribunal has only been called upon to deal with the plea of justification which might have been put forward in respect to new pieces where their performance would seem dangerous to the administration:

"It appearing that in the actual trial the parties found themselves to be in totally different positions with respect to the matter, and it is no longer a question of the production of a new play, subject to the twofold scrutiny of both the public and the Government, but of a work which, being in the repertory of

another theatre, would there have had a great number of performances, without let or hindrance on the part of the Government; with regard to the position of M. Jouslin, manager of a theatre subsidised by the Government, it is right to examine him in this case, as the decisions in previous cases are not applicable to this action:

"It appearing from the documents produced, and the pleadings and explanations given in public by the parties themselves, that the Home Minister, in the interests of the prosperity of the Théâtre Français, felt it necessary to associate M. Alexandre Dumas's talent with that theatre, and that to this end a verbal agreement was come to between Jouslin de Lasalle and Alexandre Dumas, and that the first condition of the said agreement was that the play of *Antony* should be performed at the Théâtre-Français:

"Further, it appearing, that the play of *Antony* belonged to the repertory of the Porte-Saint-Martin; that it had been played a great number of times without any interference or hindrance from authority; that it is consequently correct to say that Jouslin de Lasalle knew the gist of the agreement to be made with Alexandre Dumas, and that it was at his risk and peril that he was engaged:

"It appearing that, if Jouslin de Lasalle thought it his duty to submit, without opposition or protest on his part, to the mere notice given him by the Government, in its decision to stop the production of *Antony* at the Théâtre-Français on 28 April, the said submission of Jouslin de Lasalle must be looked upon as an act of compliance which was called forth by his own personal interests, and on account of his position as a subsidised manager, since he did not feel it his duty to enter a protest against the ministerial prohibition; that we cannot recognise here any case of *force majeure*; that this act of compliance was not sufficient warranty for prejudicing the rights of Alexandre Dumas; that his contract with Jouslin de Lasalle ought therefore to have been fulfilled or cancelled with the consequent indemnity:

"It further appearing that it is for the tribunal to settle the sum to which Alexandre Dumas is entitled as damages for the wrong that has been done him up to this present date by the non-performance by Jouslin de Lasalle of the contract made between them, the amount is fixed at 10,000 francs; therefore in giving judgment on the first count the Court directs

Jouslin de Lasalle to pay to Alexandre Dumas the said sum of 10,000 francs in full satisfaction of all damages:

"Further, deciding upon the additional claim of Alexandre Dumas: It appearing that it was not in the latter's power to be able to oppose the prohibition relative to the production of the play of *Antony*, but was the business of the subsidised manager to do so, since he had engaged the plaintiff at his own risk and peril:

"The Court orders that, during the next fortnight Jouslin de Lasalle shall use his power with the authority responsible, to get the Government to remove the prohibition; otherwise, and failing to do this during the said period, after that time, until the prohibition is removed, it is decided, and without any further judgment being necessary, that Jouslin de Lasalle shall pay Alexandre Dumas the sum of 50 francs for each day of the delay; it further orders Jouslin de Lasalle to pay the costs:

"In the matter of the claim of indemnity between Jouslin de Lasalle and the Home Minister: As it is a question of deciding upon an administrative act, this Court has no jurisdiction to deal with the matter, and dismisses the cases, and as the parties interested, who ought to have known this, have brought it before the Court, condemns M. Jouslin de Lasalle to pay the costs of this claim. . . ."

We do not think it necessary to make any commentary on this decision of the Court.

CHAPTER X

Republican banquet at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne*—The toasts—*To Louis-Philippe* !—Gathering of those who were decorated in July—Formation of the board—Protests—Fifty yards of ribbon—A dissentient—Contradiction in the *Moniteur*—Trial of Évariste Gallois—His examination—His acquittal

LET us skip over the reception of M. Viennet into the Académie Française, which fact M. Viennet doubtless learnt from his porter, as he learned later, from the same porter, that he was made a peer of France, and let us return to our friends, acquitted amidst storms of applause and enthusiastically escorted to their homes on the night of 16 April. It was decided that we should give them a banquet by subscription. This was fixed for 9 May and took place at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne*. There were two hundred subscribers. It would have been difficult to find throughout the whole of Paris two hundred guests more hostile to the Government than were these who gathered together at five o'clock in the afternoon, in a long dining-room on the ground-floor looking out on the garden. I was placed between Raspail, who had just declined the cross, and an actor from the Théâtre-Français, who had come with me far less from political conviction than from curiosity. Marrast was the depositary of the official toasts which were to be offered, and it had been decided that none should be drunk but such as had been approved by the president.

Things went smoothly enough throughout two-thirds of the dinner ; but, at the popping of the bottles of champagne, which began to simulate a well-sustained discharge of musketry, spirits rose ; the conversation, naturally of a purely political character, resolved itself into a most dangerous dialogue, and,

in the midst of official toasts, there gradually slipped private toasts.

The first illicit toast was offered to Raspail, because he had declined the Cross of the Légion d'Honneur. Fontan, who had just obtained it, took the matter personally, and began to entangle himself in a speech, the greater part of which never reached the ears of the audience. Poor Fontan had not the gift of speech and, luckily, the applause of his friends drowned the halting of his tongue.

I had no intention of offering any toast: I do not like speaking in public unless I am carried away by some passion or other. However, shouts of "Dumas! Dumas! Dumas!" compelled me to raise my glass. I proposed a toast which would have seemed very mild, if, instead of coming before the others, it had come after. I had completely forgotten what the toast was, but the actor whom I mentioned just now came to dine with me a week ago and recalled it to me. It was: "To Art! inasmuch as the pen and the paint-brush contribute as efficaciously as the rifle and sword to that social regeneration to which we have dedicated our lives and for which cause we are ready to die!"

There are times when people will applaud everything: they applauded my toast. Why not? They had just applauded Fontan's speech. It was now Étienne Arago's turn. He rose.

"*To the sun of* 1831!" he said; "may it be as warm as that of 1830 and not dazzle us as that did!"

This deserved and obtained a triple salvo of cheers. Then came the toasts of Godefroy and Eugène Cavaignac. I blame myself for having forgotten them; especially do I regret forgetting Eugène's, which was most characteristic. Suddenly, in the midst of a private conversation with my left-hand neighbour, the name of Louis-Philippe, followed by five or six hisses, caught my ear. I turned round. A most animated scene was going on fifteen or twenty places from me. A young fellow was holding his raised glass and an open dagger-knife in the same hand and trying to make himself heard. It was Évariste Gallois, who was afterwards killed in

a duel by Pescheux d'Herbinville, that delightful young man who wrapped his cartridges in tissue-paper, tied with rose-coloured favours. Évariste Gallois was scarcely twenty-three or twenty-four years of age at that time; he was one of the fiercest of Republicans. The noise was so great, that the cause of it could not be discovered because of the tumult. But I could gather there was danger threatening; the name of Louis-Philippe had been uttered—and the open knife plainly showed with what motive. This far exceeded the limits of my Republican opinions: I yielded to the persuasion of the neighbour on my left, who, in his capacity as king's comedian, could not dare to be compromised, and we leapt through the window into the garden. I returned home very uneasy: it was evident that this affair would have consequences, and, as a matter of fact, Évariste Gallois was arrested two or three days later. We shall meet him again at the end of the chapter before the Court of Assizes. This event happened at the same time as another event which was of some gravity to us. I have related that the decree concerning the Cross of July instituted the phrase, *Given by the King of the French*, and imposed the substitution of the blue ribbon edged with red, for the red edged with black. The king had signed this order in a fit of ill-temper. At one of the meetings at which I was present as a member of the committee, one of the king's aide-de-camps,—M. de Rumigny, so far as I can remember, although I cannot say for certain,—presented himself, asking, in the king's name and on behalf of the king, for the decoration of the Three Days, which had been accorded with much enthusiasm to La Fayette, Laffitte, Dupont (de l'Eure) and Béranger. This proceeding had surprised us, but not disconcerted us; we launched into discussion and decided, unanimously, that, the decoration being specially reserved for the combatants of the Three Days, or for citizens, who, without fighting, had during those three days taken an active part in the Revolution, the king, who had not entered Paris until the night of the 30th, had, therefore, no sort of right either to the decoration or to the medal. This decision was immediately

transmitted to the messenger, who transmitted it instantly to his august principal. Now, we never doubted that our refusal was the cause of the decree of 30 April. I believe I have also mentioned that a protest was made by us against the colour of the ribbon, the subscription and the oath.

Two days before the banquet at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne*, a general assembly had taken place in the hall of the *Grande-Chaumière* in the *passage du Saumon*. The total number of the decorated amounted to fifteen hundred and twenty-eight. Four hundred belonged to the *départements*, the remainder to Paris. Notices having been sent to each at his own house, all those decorated were prompt in answering the appeal; there were nearly a thousand of us gathered together. We proceeded to form a board. The president was elected by acclamation. He was one of the old conquerors of the Bastille, aged between seventy and seventy-five,—who wore next the decoration of 14 July 1789 the Cross of 29 July 1830. M. de Talleyrand was right in his dictum that nothing is more dangerous than enthusiasm; we learnt afterwards that the man we made president by acclamation was an old blackguard who had been before the assizes for violating a young girl.

Then we proceeded to the voting. The board was to be composed of fourteen members, one for each arrondissement; the thirteenth and fourteenth arrondissements represented the outlying dependencies. By a most wonderful chance, I have discovered the list of members of that board close to my hand; here it is—

"*First arrondissement*, Lamoure; *second*, Étienne Arago; *third*, Trélat; *fourth*, Moussette; *fifth*, Higonnet; *sixth*, Bastide; *seventh*, Garnier-Pagès; *eighth*, Villeret; *ninth*, Grèau; *tenth*, Godefroy Cavaignac; *eleventh*, Raspail; *twelfth*, Bavoux; *thirteenth*, Geibel; *fourteenth*, Alexandre Dumas."

The names of the fourteen members were given out and applauded; then we proceeded with the discussion. The meeting was first informed of the situation; next, different

questions were put upon which the meeting was asked to deliberate. All these queries were put to the vote, for and against, and decided accordingly. The following minutes of the meeting were immediately dispatched to the three papers, the *Temps*, the *Courrier* and the *National*.

"No oath, inasmuch as the law respecting national awards had not prescribed any such oath.

"No superscription of *Donnée par le roi*; the Cross of July is a national award, not a royal.

"All those decorated for the events of July pledge themselves to wear that cross, holding themselves authorised to do so by the insertion of their names upon the list of national awards issued by the committee.

"The king cannot be head of an order of which he is not even chevalier.

"Even were the king a chevalier of July, and he is not, his son, when he comes to the throne, would not inherit that decoration.

"Further, there is no identity whatever between his position with regard to the decoration of July and his position with regard to the Légion d'Honneur and other orders which are inherited with the kingdom.

"The right won at the place de Grève, at the Louvre and at the Caserne de Babylon is anterior to all other rights: it is not possible, without falling into absurdity, to imagine a decoration to have been given by a king who did not exist at that time, and for whose person, we publicly confess we should not have fought for then.

"With regard to the ribbon, as its change of colour does not change any principle, the ribbon suggested by the Government may be adopted."

This last clause roused a long and heated discussion. In my opinion, the colour of the ribbon was a matter of indifference; moreover, to cede one point showed that we had not previously made up our minds to reject everything. I gained a hearing, and won the majority of the meeting over to my opinion. As soon as this point had been settled by vote, I drew from my pocket three or four yards of blue ribbon edged with red, with which I had provided myself in advance, and I

decorated the board and those members of the order who were nearest me. Among them was Charras. I did not see him again after that for twenty-two years—and then he was in exile. Hardly was it noticed that a score of members were decorated, before everybody wished to be in the same case. We sent out for fifty yards of ribbon, and the thousand spectators left the *passage du Saumon* wearing the ribbon of July in their button-holes. This meeting of 7 May made a great stir in Paris. The *Moniteur* busied itself with lying as usual. It announced that the resolutions had not been unanimously passed, and that many of those decorated had protested there and then. On the contrary, no protests of any kind had been raised. This was the only note which reached the board—

"I ask that all protests against all or part of the decree relative to the distribution of the Cross of July shall be decided by those who are interested in the matter, and that no general measure shall be adopted and imposed on everyone; each of us ought to rest perfectly free to protest or not as he likes.

HUET"

This note was read aloud and stopped with hootings. We sent the following contradiction to the *Moniteur* signed by our fourteen names—

"*To the Editor of the Moniteur Universal*

"SIR,—You state that the account of the meeting of those wearing the July decoration is false, although you were not present thereat and took no part whatever in the acts of the combatants of the Three Days. We affirm that it contained nothing but the exact truth. We will not discuss the illegality of the decree of 30 April: it has been sufficiently dwelt upon by the newspapers.

"We will only say that it is a lie that any combatant of 1789 and of 1830 was brought to that meeting by means of a prearranged surprise. Citizen Decombis came of his own accord to relate how the decoration of 1789 had been distributed, and at the equally spontaneous desire of the meeting he was called to the board. It was not, as you state, a small number of men who protested against the decree; the gathering

was composed of over a thousand decorated people. The illegality of the oath and of the superscription *Donnée par le roi*, was recognised *unanimously*. None of the members present raised a hand to vote against it; all rose with enthusiasm to refuse to subscribe to that twofold illegality; this we can absolutely prove; for, in case any of the questions had not been thoroughly understood, each vote for and against the motions was repeated.

"Furthermore: all those decorated remained in the hall for an hour after the meeting, waiting for ribbons, and during that time no objections were raised against the conclusions arrived at during the deliberations.

"And this we affirm, we who have never dishonoured our pens or our oaths.

"*Signed*: LAMOURE, ST. ARAGO, TRÉLAT, MOUSSETTE, HIGONNET, BASTIDE, GARNIER-PAGÈS, VILLERET, GRÉAU, G. CAVAIGNAC, RASPAIL, BAVOUX, GEIBEL, ALEX. DUMAS."

The affair, as I have said, made a great noise; and had somewhat important consequences: an order of Republican knighthood was instituted, outside the pale of the protection and oversight of the Government. A thousand knights of this order rose up solely of their own accord, pledged only to their own conscience, able to recognise one another at a sign, always on the alert with their July guns ready to hand. The Government recoiled.

On 13 May the king issued an order decreeing that the Cross of July should be remitted by the mayors to the citizens of Paris and of the outskirts included in the *état nominatif* and in the supplementary list which the commission on national awards had drawn up. To that end, a register was opened at all municipal offices to receive the oaths of the decorated. The mayors did not have much business to do and the registers remained almost immaculate. Each one of us paid for his own decoration, and people clubbed together to buy crosses for those who could not afford that expense. The Government left us all in undisturbed peace. I have said that Gallois was arrested. His trial was rapidly hurried on: on

15 June, he appeared before the Court of Assizes. I never saw anything simpler or more straightforward than that trial, in which the prisoner seemed to make a point of furnishing the judges with the evidence of which they might be in need. Here is the writ of indictment—it furnishes me with facts of which I, at anyrate, did not yet know. Carried away in other directions by the rapidity of events, I had not troubled myself about that stormy evening. People lived fast and in an exceedingly varied way at that period. But let us listen to the king's procurator—

"On 9 May last, a reunion of two hundred persons assembled at the restaurant *Vendanges de Bourgogne*, in the faubourg du Temple to celebrate the acquittal of MM. Trélat, Cavaignac and Guinard. The repast took place in a dining-room on the ground-floor which opened out on the garden. Divers toasts were drunk, at which the most hostile opinions against the present Government were expressed. In the middle of this gathering Évariste Gallois rose and said in a loud voice, on his own responsibility: '*To Louis-Philippe!*' holding a dagger in his hand meantime. He repeated it twice. Several persons imitated his example by raising their hands and shouting similarly: '*To Louis-Philippe!*' Then hootings were heard, although the guests wish to disclaim the wretched affair, suggesting, *as Gallois declares*, that they thought he was proposing the health of the king of the French; it is, however, a well-established fact that several of the diners loudly condemn what happened. The dagger-knife had been ordered by Gallois on 6 May, from Henry, the cutler. He had seemed in a great hurry for it, giving the false excuse of going a journey."

We will now give the examination of the prisoner in its naked simplicity—

"The President.—Prisoner Gallois, were you present at the meeting which was held on 9 May last, at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne*?

"The Prisoner.—Yes, Monsieur le Président, and if you will allow me to instruct you as to the truth of what took place at it, I will save you the trouble of questioning me.

"THE PRESIDENT.—We will listen.

"THE PRISONER.—This is the exact truth of the incident to which I owe *the honour* of appearing before you. I had a knife which had been used to carve with throughout the banquet; at dessert, I raised this knife and said: '*For Louis-Philippe . . . if he turns traitor.*' These last words were only heard by my immediate neighbours, because of the fierce hootings that were raised by the first part of my speech and the notion that I intended to propose a toast to that man.

"D.[1]—Then, in your opinion, a toast proposed to the king's health was proscribed at that gathering?

"R.—To be sure!

"D.—A toast offered purely and simply to Louis-Philippe, king of the French, would have excited the animosity of that assembly?

"R.—Assuredly.

"D.—Your intention, therefore, was to put King Louis-Philippe to the dagger?

"R.—In case he turned traitor, yes, monsieur.

"D.—Was it, on your part, the expression of your own personal sentiment to set forth the king of the French as deserving a dagger-stroke, or was your real intention to provoke the others to a like action?

"R.—I wished to incite them to such a deed if Louis-Philippe proved a traitor, that is to say, in case he ventured to depart from legal action.

"D.—Why do you suppose the king is likely to act illegally?

"R.—Everybody unites in thinking that it will not be long before he makes himself guilty of that crime, if he has not already done so.

"D.—Explain yourself.

"R.—I should have thought it clear enough.

"D.—No matter! Explain it.

"R.—Well, I say then, that the trend of Government action leads one to suppose that Louis-Philippe will some day be treacherous if he has not already been so."

It will be understood that with such lucid questions and answers the proceedings would be brief. The jury retired to a

[1] TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—
D = *Demande* (Question). R = *Réponse* (Answer).

room to deliberate and brought in a verdict of not guilty. Did they consider Gallois mad, or were they of his opinion? Gallois was instantly set at liberty. He went straight to the desk on which his knife lay open as damning evidence, picked it up, shut it, put it in his pocket, bowed to the bench and went out. I repeat, those were rough times! A little mad, maybe; but you will recollect Béranger's song about *Les Fous*.

CHAPTER XI

The incompatibility of literature with riotings—*La Maréchale d'Ancre*—My opinion concerning that piece—*Farruck le Maure*—The début of Henry Monnier at the Vaudeville—I leave Paris—Rouen—Havre—I meditate going to explore Trouville—What is Trouville?—The consumptive English lady—Honfleur—By land or by sea

IT was a fatiguing life we led: each day brought its emotions, either political or literary. *Antony* went on its successful course in the midst of various disturbances. Every night, without any apparent motive whatsoever, a crowd gathered on the boulevard. The rallying-place varied between the Théâtre-Gymnase and that of the Ambigu. At first composed of five or six persons, it grew progressively; policemen would next appear and walk about with an aggressive air along the boulevard; the gutter urchins threw cabbage stumps or carrot ends at them, which was quite sufficient after half an hour or an hour's proceedings to cause a nice little row, which began at five o'clock in the afternoon and lasted till midnight. This daily popular irritation attracted many people to the boulevard and very few to the plays. *Antony* was the only piece which defied the disturbances and the heat, and brought in sums of between twelve thousand and fifteen thousand francs. But there was such stagnation in business, and so great was the fear that spread over the book-trade, that the same publishers who had offered me six thousand francs for *Henri III.*, and twelve thousand francs for *Christine*, hardly dared offer to print *Antony* for half costs and half profits. I had it printed, not at half costs by a publisher, but entirely at my own expense.

There was no way possible for me to remain in Paris any longer: riots swallowed up too much time and money. *Antony*

did not bring in enough to keep a man going; also, I was being goaded by the demon of poetry, which urged me to do something fresh. But how could one work in Paris, in the midst of gatherings at the *Grande-Chaumière*, dinners at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne* and lawsuits at the Assize Courts? I conferred with Cavaignac and Bastide. I learnt that there would be nothing serious happening in Paris for six months or a year, and I obtained a holiday for three months. Only two causes kept me still in Paris: the first production of the *Maréchale d'Ancre* and the début of Henry Monnier. De Vigny, who had not yet ventured anything at the theatre but his version of *Othello*, to which I referred in its right place, was about to make his real entry in the *Maréchale d'Ancre*. It was a fine subject; I had been on the point of treating it, but had renounced it because my good and learned friend Paul Lacroix, better known then under the name of the bibliophile Jacob, had begun a drama on the same subject.

Louis XIII., that inveterate hunter after *la pie-grièche*, escaping from the guardianship of his mother by a crime, proclaiming his coming of age to the firing of pistols which killed the favourite of Marie de Médicis, resolving upon that infamous deed whilst playing at chess with his favourite, de Luynes, who was hardly two years older than himself; a monarch timid in council and brave in warfare, a true Valois astray among the Bourbons, lean, melancholy and sickly-looking, with a profile half like that of Henri IV. and half like Louis XIV., without the goodness of the one and the dignity of the other; this Louis XIII. held out to me the promise of a curious royal figure to take as a model, I who had already given birth to *Henri III.* and was later to bring *Charles IX.* to the light of day. But, as I have said, I had renounced it. De Vigny, who did not know Paul Lacroix, or hardly knew him, had not the same reason for abstaining, and he had written a five-act drama in prose on this subject, which had been received at the Odéon. Here was yet another battle to fight.

De Vigny, at that time, as I believe he still does, belonged to the Royalist party. He had therefore two things to fight—

the enemies which his opinions brought him, and those who were envious of his talent,—a talent cold, sober, charming, more dreamy than virile, more intellectual than passionate, more nervous than strong. The piece was excellently well put on: Mademoiselle Georges took the part of the Maréchale d'Ancre; Frédérick, that of Concini; Ligier, Borgia; and Noblet, Isabelle. The difference between de Vigny's way of treating drama and mine shows itself in the very names of the characters. One looked in vain for Louis XIII. I should have made him my principal personage. Perhaps, though, the absence of Louis XIII. in de Vigny's drama was more from political opinion than literary device. The author being, as I say, a Royalist, may have preferred to leave his royalty behind the wings than to show it in public with a pale and bloodstained face. The *Maréchale d'Ancre* is more of a novel than a play; the plot, so to speak, is too complicated in its corners and too simple in its middle spaces. The Maréchale falls without a struggle, without catastrophe, without clinging to anything: she slips and falls to the ground; she is seized; she dies. As to Concini, as the author was much embarrassed to know what to do with him, he makes him spend ten hours at a Jew's, waiting for a young girl whom he has only seen once; and, just when he learns that Borgia is with his wife, and jealousy lends him wings to fly to the Louvre, he loses himself on a staircase. During the whole of the fourth act, whilst his wife is being taken to the Bastille, and they are trying her and condemning her, he is groping about to find the bannisters and seeking the door; when he comes out of Isabelle's room at the end of the third act, he does not reappear again on the stage till the beginning of the fifth, and then only to die in a corner of the rue de la Ferronnerie. That is the principal idea of the drama. According to the author, Concini is the real assassin of Henry IV.; Ravaillac is only the instrument. That is why, instead of being killed within the limits of the court of the Louvre, the Maréchal d'Ancre is killed close to the rue de la Ferronnerie, on the same spot where the assassin waited to give the terrible dagger-stroke of Friday, 14 May 1610. In other respects I

agree with the author; I do not think it at all necessary that a work of art should possess as hall-mark, "un parchemin par crime et un in-folio par passion." For long I have held that, in theatrical matters specially, it seems to me permissible to violate history provided one begets offspring thereby; but to let Concini kill Henri IV. with no other object than that Concini should reign, after the death of Béarnais, by the queen and through the queen, is to give a very small reason for so great a crime. Put Concini behind Ravaillac if you will, but, behind Concini, place the queen and Épernon, and behind the queen and Épernon place Austria, the eternal enemy of France! Austria, who has never put out her hand to France save with a knife in it, the blade of Jacques Clément, the dagger of Ravaillac and the pen-knife of Damiens, knowing well it would be too dangerous to touch her with a sword-point.

It did not meet with much success, in spite of the high order of beauty which characterised the work, beauty of style particularly. An accident contributed to this: after the two first acts, the best in my opinion, I do not know what caprice seized Georges, but she pretended she was ill, and the stage-manager came on in a black coat and white tie to tell the spectators that the remainder of the representation was put off until another day. As a matter of fact, the *Maréchale d'Ancre* was not resumed until eight or ten days later. It needs a robust constitution to hold up against such a check! The *Maréchale d'Ancre* held its own and had quite a good run. Between the *Maréchale d'Ancre* and Henry Monnier's first appearance a three-act drama was played at the Porte-Saint-Martin, patronised by Hugo and myself: this was *Farruck le Maure*, by poor Escousse. The piece was not good, but owing to Bocage it had a greater success than one could have expected. It afterwards acquired a certain degree of importance because of the author's suicide, who, in his turn, was better known by the song, or rather, the elegy which Béranger wrote about him, than by the two plays he had had played. We shall return to this unfortunate boy and to Lebras his fellow-suicide.

It was on 5 July that Henry Monnier came out. I doubt if any début ever produced such a literary sensation. He was then about twenty-six or twenty-eight years of age; he was known in the artistic world on three counts. As painter, pupil of Girodet and of Gros, he had, after his return from travel in England, been instrumental in introducing the first wood-engraving executed in Paris, and he published *Mœurs administratives*, *Grisettes* and *Illustrations de Béranger*. As author, at the instigation of his friend Latouche, he printed his *Scènes populaires*, thanks to which the renown of the French *gendarme* and of the Parisian *titi*[1] spread all over the world. Finally, as a private actor in society he had been the delight of supper-parties, acting for us, with the aid of a curtain or a folding-screen, his *Halte d'une diligence*, his *Étudiant* and his *Grisette*, his *Femme qui a trop chaud* and his *Ambassade de M. de Cobentzel*.

On the strength of being applauded in drawing-rooms, he thought he would venture on the stage, and he wrote for himself and for his own début, a piece called *La Famille improvisée*, which he took from his *Scènes populaires*. Two types created by Henry Monnier have lasted and will last: his Joseph Prudhomme, professor of writing, pupil of Brard and Saint-Omer; and Coquerel, lover of la Duthé and of la Briand. I have spoken of the interior of the Théâtre-Français on the day of the first performance of *Henri III.*; that of the Vaudeville was not less remarkable on the evening of 5 July; all the literary and artistic celebrities seemed to have arranged to meet in the rue de Chartres. Among artists and sculptors were, Picot, Gérard, Horace Vernet, Carle Vernet, Delacroix, Boulanger, Pradier, Desbœufs, the Isabeys, Thiolier and I know not who else. Of poets there were Châteaubriand, Lamartine, Hugo, the whole of us in fact. For actresses, Mesdemoiselles Mars, Duchesnois, Leverd, Dorval, Perlet and Nourrit, and every actor who was not taking part on the stage that night. Of society notabilities there were Vaublanc, Mornay, Blanc-ménil,

[1] Young workman of the Parisian faubourgs.

Madame de la Bourdonnaie, the witty Madame O'Donnell, the ubiquitous Madame de Pontécoulant, Châteauvillars, who has the prerogative of not growing old either in face or in mind, Madame de Castries, all the faubourg Saint-Germain, the Chaussée-d'Antin and the faubourg Saint-Honoré. The whole of the journalist world was there. It was an immense success. Henry Monnier reappeared twice, being called first as actor then as author. This, as I have said, was on 5 July, and from that day until the end of December the piece was never taken off the bills.

I went away the next day. Where was I going? I did not know. I had flung a feather to the wind; it blew that day from the south, so my feather was carried northwards. I set out therefore, for the north, and should probably go to Havre. There seems to be an invincible attraction leading one back to places one has previously visited. It will be remembered that I was at Havre in 1828 and rewrote *Christine*, as far as the plot was concerned, in the coach between Paris and Rouen. Then, too, Rouen is such a beautiful town to see with its cathedral, its church of Saint-Ouen, its ancient houses with their wood-carvings, its town-hall and hôtel Bourgtheroude, that one longs to see it all again! I stopped a day there. Next day the boat left at six in the morning. At that time it still took fourteen hours to get from Paris to Rouen by diligence, and ten hours from Rouen to Havre by boat. Now, by *express train* it only takes three and a half! True, one departs and arrives—when one does arrive—but one does not really travel; you do not see Jumiéges, or la Meilleraie or Tancarville, or all that charming country by Villequier, where, one day, ten years after I was there, the daughter of our great poet met her death in the midst of a pleasure party. Poor Léopoldine! she would be at Jersey now, completing the devout colony which provided a family if not a country for our exiled Dante, dreaming of another inferno! Oh! if only I were that mysterious unknown whose elastic arm could extend from one side of the Guadalquiver to the other, to offer a light to Don Juan's cigar, how I would

stretch out each morning and evening my arm from Brussels to Jersey to clasp the beloved hand which wrote the finest verse and the most vigorous prose of this century!

We no longer see Honfleur, with its fascinating bell-tower, built by the English; an erection which made some bishop or other, travelling to improve his mind, say, "I feel sure that was not made here!" In short, one goes to Havre and returns the same day, and one can even reach Aix-la-Chapelle the next morning. If you take away distance, you augment the duration of time. Nowadays we do not live so long, but we get through more.

When I reached Havre I went in search of a place where I could spend a month or six weeks; I wanted but a village, a corner, a hole, provided it was close to the sea, and I was recommended to go to Sainte-Adresse and Trouville. For a moment I wavered between the two districts, which were both equally unknown to me; but, upon pursuing my inquiries further, and having learnt that Trouville was even more isolated and hidden and solitary than Sainte-Adresse, I decided upon Trouville. Then I recollected, as one does in a dream, that my good friend Huet, the landscape painter, a painter of marshes and beaches, had told me of a charming village by the sea, where he had been nearly choked with a fish bone, and that the village was called Trouville. But he had forgotten to tell me how to get to it. I therefore had to make inquiries. There were infinitely more opportunities for getting from Havre to Rio-de-Janeiro, Sydney or the coast of Coromandel than there were to Trouville. Its latitude and longitude were, at that time, almost as little known as those of Robinson Crusoe's island. Sailors, going from Honfleur to Cherbourg, had pointed out Trouville in the distance, as a little settlement of fishermen, which, no doubt, traded with la Délivrande and Pont-l'Évêque, its nearest neighbours; but that was all they knew about it. As to the tongue those fisherfolk talked they were completely ignorant, the only relations they had hitherto had with them had been held from afar and by signs. I have always had a passion

for discoveries and explorations; I thereupon decided, if not exactly to discover Trouville, at least to explore it, and to do for the river de la Touque what Levaillant, the beloved traveller of my childhood, had done for the Elephant River. That resolution taken, I jumped into the boat for Honfleur, where fresh directions as to the route I should follow would be given me. We arrived at Honfleur. During that two hours' crossing at flood-tide, everybody was seasick, except a beautiful consumptive English lady, with long streaming hair and cheeks like a peach and a rose, who battled against the scourge with large glasses of brandy! I have never seen a sadder sight than that lovely figure standing up, walking about the deck of the boat, whilst everybody else was either seated or lying down; she, doomed to death, with every appearance of good health, whilst all the other passengers, who looked at the point of death, regained their strength directly they touched the shore again, like many another Antæus before them. If there are spirits, they must walk and look and smile just as that beautiful English woman walked and looked and smiled. When we landed at Honfleur, just as the boat stopped, her mother and a young brother, as fair and as rosy as she seemed, rose up as though from a battlefield and rejoined her with dragging steps. She, on the contrary, whilst we were sorting out our boxes and portmanteaux, lightly cleared the drawbridge which was launched from the landing-stage to the side of the miniature steam-packet, and disappeared round a corner of the rue de Honfleur. I never saw her again and shall never see her again, probably, except in the valley of Jehoshaphat; but, whether I see her again, there or elsewhere—in this world, which seems to me almost impossible, or in the other, which seems to me almost improbable — I will guarantee that I shall recognise her at the first glance.

We were hardly at Honfleur before we were making inquiries as to the best means of being transported to Trouville. There were two ways of going, by land or by sea. By land they offered us a wretched wagon and two bad horses for twenty

francs, and we should travel along a bad road, taking five hours to reach Trouville. Going by sea, with the outgoing tide, it would take two hours, in a pretty barque rowed by four vigorous oarsmen; a picturesque voyage along the coast, where I should see great quantities of birds, such as sea-mews, gulls and divers; on the right the infinite ocean, on the left immense cliffs. Then if the wind was good—and it could not fail to be favourable, sailors never doubt that!—it would only take two hours to cross. It was true that, if the wind was unfavourable, we should have to take to oars, and should not arrive till goodness knows when. Furthermore, they asked twelve francs instead of twenty. Happily my travelling companion—for I have forgotten to say that I had a travelling companion—was one of the most economical women I have ever met; although she had been very sick in crossing from Havre to Honfleur, this saving of eight francs appealed to her, and as I had gallantly left the choice of the two means of transport to her she decided on the boat. Two hours later we left Honfleur as soon as the tide began to turn.

CHAPTER XII

Appearance of Trouville—Mother Oseraie—How people are accommodated at Trouville when they are married—The price of painters and of the community of martyrs—Mother Oseraie's acquaintances—How she had saved the life of Huet, the landscape painter—My room and my neighbour's—A twenty-franc dinner for fifty sous—A walk by the seashore—Heroic resolution

THE weather kept faith with our sailors' promise: the sea was calm, the wind in the right quarter and, after a delightful three hours' crossing—following that picturesque coast, on the cliffs of which, sixteen years later, King Louis-Philippe, against whom we were to wage so rude a war, was to stand anxiously scanning the sea for a ship, if it were but a rough barque like that Xerxes found upon which to cross the Hellespont—our sailors pointed out Trouville. It was then composed of a few fishing huts grouped along the right bank of the Touque, at the mouth of that river, between two low ranges of hills enclosing a charming valley as a casket encloses a set of jewels. Along the left bank were great stretches of pasture-land which promised me magnificent snipe-shooting. The tide was out and the sands, as smooth and shining as glass, were dry. Our sailors hoisted us on their backs and we were put down upon the sand.

The sight of the sea, with its bitter smell, its eternal moaning, has an immense fascination for me. When I have not seen it for a long time I long for it as for a beloved mistress, and, no matter what stands in the way, I have to return to it, to breathe in its breath and taste its kisses for the twentieth time. The three happiest months of my life, or at any rate the most pleasing to the senses, were those I spent with my Sicilian

sailors in a *speronare*, during my Odyssey in the Tyrrhenian Sea. But, in this instance, I began my maritime career, and it must be conceded that it was not a bad beginning to discover a seaport like Trouville. The beach, moreover, was alive and animated as though on a fair day. Upon our left, in the middle of an archipelago of rocks, a whole collection of children were gathering baskets full of mussels; upon our right, women were digging in the sand with vigorous plying of spades, to extract a small kind of eel which resembled the fibres of the salad called *barbe de capucin* (*i.e.* wild chicory); and all round our little barque, which, although still afloat, looked as though it would soon be left dry, a crowd of fishermen and fisherwomen were shrimping, walking with athletic strides, with the water up to their waists and pushing in front of them long-handled nets into which they reaped their teeming harvest. We stopped at every step; everything on that unknown seashore was a novelty to us. Cook, landing on the Friendly Isles, was not more absorbed or happy than was I. The sailors, noticing our enjoyment, told us they would carry our luggage to the inn and tell them of our coming.

"To the inn! But which inn?" I asked.

"There is no fear of mistake," replied the wag of the company, "for there is but one."

"What is its name?"

"It has none. Ask for Mother Oseraie and the first person you meet will direct you to her house."

We were reassured by this information and had no further hesitation about loafing to our heart's content on the beach of Trouville. An hour later, various stretches of sand having been crossed and two or three directions asked in French and answered in Trouvillois, we managed to land at our inn. A woman of about forty—plump, clean and comely, with the quizzical smile of the Norman peasant on her lips—came up to us. This was Mother Oseraie, who probably never suspected the celebrity which one day the Parisian whom she received with an almost sneering air was to give her. Poor Mother Oseraie! had she suspected such a thing, perhaps she would

have treated me as Plato in his *Republic* advises that poets shall be dealt with: crowned with flowers and shown to the door! Instead of this, she advanced to meet me, and after gazing at me with curiosity from head to foot, she said—

"Good! so you have come?"

"What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"Well, your luggage has arrived and two rooms engaged for you."

"Ah! now I understand."

"Why two rooms?"

"One for madame and one for myself."

"Oh! but with us when people are married they sleep together!"

"First of all, who told you that madame and I were married? . . . Besides, when we are, I shall be of the opinion of one of my friends whose name is Alphonse Karr!"

"Well, what does your friend whose name is Alphonse Karr say?"

"He says that at the end of a certain time, when a man and a woman occupy only one room together, they cease to become lover and mistress and become male and female; that is what he says."

"Ah! I do not understand. However, no matter! you want two rooms?"

"Exactly."

"Well, you shall have them; but I would much rather you only took one [*prissiez*]."

I will not swear that she said *prissiez*, but the reader will forgive me for adding that embellishment to our dialogue.

"Of course, I can see through that," I replied; "you would have made us pay for two and you would have had one room left to let to other travellers."

"Precisely!—I say, you are not very stupid for a Parisian, I declare!"

I bowed to Mother Oseraie.

"I am not altogether a Parisian," I replied; "but that is a mere matter of detail."

"Then you will have the two rooms?"

"I will."

"I warn you they open one out of the other."

"Capital!"

"You shall be taken to them."

She called a fine strapping lass with nose and eyes and petticoats turned up.

"Take madame to her room," I said to the girl; "I will stop here and talk to Mother Oseraie."

"Why?"

"Because I find your conversation pleasant."

"Gammon!"

"Also I want to know what you will take us for per day."

"And the night does not count then?"

"Night and day."

"There are two charges: for artists, it is forty sous."

"What! forty sous . . . for what?"

"For board and lodging of course!"

"Ah! forty sous! . . . And how many meals for that?"

"As many as you like! two, three, four—according to your hunger—of course!"

"Good! you say, then, that it is forty sous per day?"

"For artists—Are you a painter?"

"No."

"Well, then it will be fifty sous for you and fifty for your lady—a hundred sous together."

I could not believe the sum.

"Then it is a hundred sous for two, three or four meals and two rooms?"

"A hundred sous—Do you think it is too dear?"

"No, if you do not raise the price."

"Why should I raise it, pray?"

"Oh well, we shall see."

"No! not here . . . If you were a painter it would only be forty sous."

"What is the reason for this reduction in favour of artists?"

"Because they are such nice lads and I am so fond of them. It was they who began to make the reputation of my inn."

"By the way, do you know a painter called Decamps?"

"Decamps? I should think so!"

"And Jadin?"

"Jadin? I do not know that name."

I thought Mother Oseraie was bragging; but I possessed a touchstone.

"And Huet?" I asked.

"Oh, yes! I knew him."

"You do not remember anything in particular about him, do you?"

"Indeed, yes, I remember that I saved his life."

"Bah! come, how did that happen?"

"One day when he was choking with a sole bone. It doesn't take long to choke one's self with a fish bone!"

"And how did you save his life."

"Oh! only just in time. Why, he was already black in the face."

"What did you do to him?"

"I said to him, 'Be patient and wait for me.'"

"It is not easy to be patient when one is choking."

"Good heavens! what else could I have said? It wasn't my fault. Then I ran as fast as I could into the garden; I tore up a leek, washed it, cut off its stalks and stuffed it right down his throat. It is a sovereign remedy for fish bones!"

"Indeed, I can well believe it."

"Now, he never speaks of me except with tears in his eyes."

"All the more since the leek belongs to the onion family."

"All the same, it vexes me."

"What vexes you? That the poor dear man was not choked?"

"No, no, indeed! I am delighted and I thank you both in his name and in my own: he is a friend of mine, and, besides,

a man of great talent. But I am vexed that Trouville has been discovered by three artists before being discovered by a poet."

"Are you a poet, then?"

"Well, I might perhaps venture to say that I am."

"What is a poet? Does it bring in an income?"

"No."

"Well, then, it is a poor sort of business."

I saw I had given Mother Oseraie but an indifferent idea of myself.

"Would you like me to pay you a fortnight in advance?"

"What for?"

"Why! In case you are afraid that as I am a poet I may go without paying you!"

"If you went away without paying me it would be all the worse for you, but not for me."

"How so?"

"For having robbed an honest woman; for I am an honest woman, I am."

"I begin to believe it, Mother Oseraie; but I, too, you see, am not a bad lad."

"Well, I don't mind telling you that you give me that impression. Will you have dinner?"

"Rather! Twice over rather than once."

"Then, go upstairs and leave me to attend to my business."

"But what will you give us for dinner?"

"Ah! that is my business."

"How is it your business?"

"Because, if I do not satisfy you, you will go elsewhere."

"But there is nowhere else to go!"

"Which is as good as to say that you will put up with what I have got, my good friend. . . . Come, off to your room!"

I began to adapt myself to the manners of Mother Oseraie: it was what is called in the *morale en action* and in collections of anecdotes "la franchise villageoise" (country frankness). I should much have preferred "l'urbanité parisienne" (Parisian urbanity); but Mother Oseraie was built on other lines, and I

was obliged to take her as she was. I went up to my room: it was quadrilateral, with lime-washed walls, a deal floor, a walnut table, a wooden bed painted red, and a chimney-piece with a shaving-glass instead of a looking-glass, and, for ornament, two blue elaborately decorated glass vases; furthermore there was the spray of orange-blossom which Mother Oseraie had had when she was twenty years of age, as fresh as on the day it was plucked, owing to the shade, which kept it from contact with the air. Calico curtains to the window and linen sheets on the bed, both sheets and curtains as white as the snow, completed the furnishings. I went into the adjoining room; it was furnished on the same lines, and had, besides, a convex-shaped chest of drawers inlaid with different coloured woods which savoured of the bygone days of du Barry, and which, if restored, regilded, repaired, would have looked better in the studio of one of the three painters Mother Oseraie had just mentioned. The view from both windows was magnificent. From mine, the valley of the Touque could be seen sinking away towards Pont-l'Évêque, which is surrounded by two wooded hills; from my companion's, the sea, flecked with little fishing-boats, their sails white against the horizon, waiting to return with the tide. Chance had indeed favoured me in giving me the room which looked on to the valley: if I had had the sea, with its waves, and gulls, and boats, its horizon melting into the sky always before me, I should have found it impossible to work. I had completely forgotten the dinner when I heard Mother Oseraie calling me—

"I say, monsieur poet!"

"Well! mother!" I replied.

"Come! dinner is ready."

I offered my arm to my neighbour and we went down. Oh! worthy Mother Oseraie! when I saw your soup, your mutton cutlets, your soles *en matelote*, your mayonnaise of lobster, your two roast snipe and your shrimp salad, how I regretted I had had doubts of you for an instant! Fifty sous for a dinner which, in Paris, would have cost twenty francs! True, wine would have accounted for some of the difference;

but we might drink as much cider as we liked free of charge. My travelling companion suggested taking a lease of three, six, or nine years with Mother Oseraie; during which nine years, in her opinion, we could economise to the extent of a hundred and fifty thousand francs! Perhaps she was right, poor Mélanie! but how was Paris and its revolutions to get on without me? As soon as dinner was finished we went back to the beach. It was high tide, and the barques were coming into the harbour like a flock of sheep to the fold. Women were waiting on the shore with huge baskets to carry off the fish. Each woman recognised her own boat and its rigging from afar; mothers called out to their sons, sisters to their brothers, wives to their husbands. All talked by signs before the boats were near enough to enable them to use their voices, and it was soon known whether the catch had been good or bad. All the while, a hot July sun was sinking below the horizon, surrounded by great clouds which it fringed with purple, and through the gaps between the clouds it darted its golden rays, Apollo's arrows, which disappeared in the sea. I do not know anything more beautiful or grand or magnificent than a sunset over the ocean! We remained on the beach until it was completely dark. I was perfectly well aware that, if I did not from the beginning cut short this desire for contemplation which had taken possession of me, I should spend my days in shooting sea-birds, gathering oysters among the rocks and catching eels in the sand. I therefore resolved to combat this sweet enemy styled idleness, and to set myself to work that very evening if possible.

I was under an agreement with Harel; it had been arranged that I should bring him back a play in verse, of five acts, entitled *Charles VII. chez ses grands vassaux.* M. Granier, otherwise de Cassagnac, published, in 1833, a work on me, since continued by M. Jacquot, otherwise de Mirecourt, a work in which he pointed out the sources whence I had drawn all the plots for my plays, and taken all the ideas for my novels. I intend, as I go on with these Memoirs, to undertake that work myself, and I guarantee that it shall be

more complete and more conscientious than that of my two renowned critics; only, I hope my readers will not demand that it shall be as malicious. But let me relate how the idea of writing *Charles VII.* came to me, and of what heterogeneous elements that drama was composed.

CHAPTER XIII

A reading at Nodier's—The hearers and the readers—Début—*Les Marrons du feu*—La Camargo and the Abbé Desiderio—Genealogy of a dramatic idea—Orestes and Hermione—Chimène and Don Sancho—*Goetz von Berlichingen*—Fragments—How I render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's

TOWARDS the close of 1830, or the beginning of 1831, we were invited to spend an evening with Nodier. A young fellow of twenty-two or twenty-three was to read some portions of a book of poems he was about to publish. This young man's name was then almost unknown in the world of letters, and it was now going to be given to the public for the first time. Nobody ever failed to attend a meeting called by our dear Nodier and our lovely Marie. We were all, therefore, punctual in our appearance. By everybody, I mean our ordinary circle of the Arsenal: Lamartine, Hugo, de Vigny, Jules de Rességuier, Sainte-Beuve, Lefèbvre, Taylor, the two Johannots, Louis Boulanger, Jal, Laverdant, Bixio, Amaury Duval, Francis Wey, etc.; and a crowd of young girls with flowers in their dresses, who have since become the beautiful and devoted mothers of families. About ten o'clock a young man of ordinary height—thin, fair, with budding moustache and long curling hair, thrown back in clusters to the sides of his head, a green, tight-fitting coat and light-coloured trousers—entered, affecting a very easy demeanour which, perhaps, was meant to conceal actual timidity. This was our poet. Very few among us knew him personally, even by sight or name. A table, glass of water and two candles had been put ready for him. He sat down, and, so far as I can remember, he

read from a printed book and not from a manuscript. From the very start that assembly of poets trembled with excitement; they felt they had a poet before them, and the volume opened with these lines, which I may be permitted to quote, although they are known by all the world. We have said, and we cannot repeat it too often, that these memoirs are not only Memoirs but recollections of the art, poetry, literature and politics of the first fifty years of the century. When we have attacked, severely, perhaps, but honestly and loyally, things that were base and low and shameful; when we have tracked down hypocrisy, punished treachery, ridiculed mediocrity, it has been both good and sweet to raise our eyes to the sky, to look at, and to worship in spirit, those beautiful golden clouds which, to many people, seem but flimsy vapours, but which to us are planetary worlds wherein we hope our souls will find refuge throughout eternity; and, even though conscious that we may, perhaps, be wrong in so doing, we hail their uncommon outlines with more pride and joy than when setting forth our own works. I am entirely disinterested in the matter of the author of these verses; for I scarcely knew him and we hardly spoke to one another a dozen times. I admire him greatly, although he, I fear, has not a great affection for me. The poet began thus—

"Je n'ai jamais aimé, pour ma part, ces bégueules
Qui ne sauraient aller au Prado toutes seules;
Qu'une duègne toujours, de quartier en quartier,
Talonne, comme fait sa mule un muletier;
Qui s'usent, à prier, les genoux et la lèvre,
Se courbent sur le grès plus pâles, dans leur fièvre,
Qu'un homme qui, pieds nus, marche sur un serpent,
Ou qu'un faux monnayeur au moment qu on le pend.
Certes, ces femmes-là, pour mener cette vie,
Portent un cœur châtré de tout noble envie;
Elles n'ont pas de sang et pas d'entrailles!—Mais,
Sur ma tête et mes os, frère, je vous promets
Qu'elles valent encor quatre fois mieux que celles
Dont le temps se dépense en intrigues nouvelles.
Celles-là vont au bal, courent les rendez-vous,
Savent dans un manchon cacher un billet doux,

Serrar un ruban noir sur un beau flanc qui ploie,
Jeter d'un balcon d'or une échelle de soie,
Suivre l'imbroglio de ces amours mignons
Poussés dans une nuit comme des champignons ;
Si charmantes d'ailleurs ! Aimant en enragées
Les moustaches, les chiens, la valse et les dragées.
Mais, oh ! la triste chose et l'étrange malheur,
Lorsque dans leurs filets tombe un homme de cœur !
Frère, mieux lui vaudrait, comme ce statuaire
Qui pressait de ses bras son amante de pierre,
Réchauffer de baisers un marbre ! Mieux vaudrait
Une louve enragée en quelque âpre forêt ! . . ."

You see he was not mistaken in his own estimate; these lines were thoughtful and well-constructed; they march with a proud and lusty swing, hand-on-hip, slender-waisted, splendidly draped in their Spanish cloak. They were not like Lamartine, or Hugo or de Vigny: a flower culled from the same garden, it is true; a fruit of the same orchard even; but a flower possessed of its own odour and a fruit with a taste of its own. Good! Here am I, meaning to relate worthless things concerning myself, saying good things about Alfred de Musset. Upon my word, I do not regret it and it is all the better for myself.[1] I have, however, do not let us forget, yet to explain how that dramatic *pastiche* which goes by the name of *Charles VII.* came to be written. The night went by in a flash. Alfred de Musset read the whole volume instead of a few pieces from it: *Don Paez*, *Porcia*, the *Andalouse*, *Madrid*, the *Ballade à la lune*, *Mardoche*, etc., probably about two thousand lines; only, I must admit that the young girls who were present at the reading, whether they were with their mammas or alone, must have had plenty to do to look after their eyelids and their fans. Among these pieces was a kind of comedy entitled the *Marrons du feu*. La Camargo, that Belgian dancer, celebrated by Voltaire, who was the delight of the opera of 1734 to 1751, is its heroine; but, it must be said, the poor girl is sadly calumniated in the poem. In the first

[1] See our study on Alfred de Musset in *les Morts vont vite*, vol. ii. p. 85.

place, the poet imagines she was loved to distraction by a handsome Italian named Rafaël Garuci, and that this love was stronger at the end of two years than it had ever been. Calumny number one. Then, he goes on to suppose that Seigneur Garuci, tired of the dancer, gives his clothes to the Abbé Annibal Desiderio, and tells him how he can gain access to the beautiful woman. Calumny number two—but not so serious as the first, Seigneur Rafaël Garuci having probably never existed save in the poet's brain. Finally, he relates that, when she finds herself face to face with the abbé disguised as a gentleman, and finds out that it is Rafaël who has provided him with the means of access to her, whilst he himself is supping at that very hour with la Cydalise, la Camargo is furious against her faithless lover, and says to the abbé—

"Abbé, je veux du sang! j'en suis plus altérée
Qu'une corneille au vent d'un cadavre attirée!
Il est là-bas, dis-tu? Cours-y donc! coupe-lui
La gorge, et tire-le par les pieds jusqu'ici!
Tords-lui le cœur, abbé, de peur qu'il n'en réchappe;
Coupe-le en quatre, et mets les morceaux dans la nappe!
Tu me l'apporteras; et puisse m'écraser
La foudre, si tu n'as par blessure un baiser! . . .
Tu tressailles, Romain? C'est une faute étrange,
Si tu te crois conduit ici par ton bon ange!
Le sang te fait-il peur? Pour t'en faire un manteau
De cardinal, il faut la pointe d'un couteau!
Me jugeais-tu le cœur si large, que j'y porte
Deux amours à la fois, et que pas un n'en sorte?
C'est une faute encor: mon cœur n'est pas si grand,
Et le dernier venu ronge l'autre en entrant . . ."

The abbé has to fight Rafaël on the morrow; he entreats her to wait at least until after that.

"Et s'il te tu
Demain? et si j'en meurs? si j'en suis devenue
Folle? si le soleil, de prenant à pâlir,
De ce sombre horizon ne pouvait plus sortir?
On a vu quelquefois de telles nuits au monde!
Demain! le vais-je attendre à compter, par seconde,

Les heures sur mes doigts, ou ser les battements
De mon cœur, comme un juif qui calcule le temps
D'un prêt? Demain, ensuite, irai-je, pour te plaire,
Jouer à croix ou pile, et mettre ma colère.
Au bout d'un pistolet qui tremble avec ta main?
Non pas! non! Aujourd'hui est à nous, mais demain
Est a Dieu! . . ."

The abbé ended by giving in to the prayers, caresses and tears of la Camargo, as Orestes yielded to Hermione's promises, transports and threats; urged on by the beautiful, passionate courtesan, he killed Rafaël, as Orestes killed Pyrrhus; and, like Orestes, he returned to demand from la Camargo recompense for his love, the price of blood. Like Hermione, she failed to keep her word to him. Calumny number three.

La Camargo is at her harpsichord; the abbé raps at the door.

"Entrez!

L'abbé entre et lui présente son poignard; la Camargo le considère quelque temps, puis se lève.)

A-t-il souffert beaucoup?

— Bon! c'est l'affaire
D'un moment!

— Qu'a-t-il dit?

— Il a dit que la terre
Tournait.

— Quoi! rien de plus?

— Ah! qu'il donnait son bien
A son bouffon Pippo.

— Quoi! rien de plus?

— Non, rien.
— Il porte au petit doigt un diamant: de grâce,
Allez me le chercher!

— Je ne le puis.

— La place
Où vous l'avez laissé n'est pas si loin.

— Non, mais
Je ne le puis.

— Abbé, tout ce que je promets,
Je le tiens.

— Pas ce soir! . . .

— Pourquoi?

— Mais . . .

— Misérable

Tu ne l'as pas tué !
— Moi ? Que le ciel m'accable
Si je ne l'ai pas fait, madame, en vérité !
— En ce cas, pourquoi non ?
— Ma foi, je l'ai jeté
Dans la mer.
— Quoi ! ce soir, dans la mer ?
— Oui, madame.
— Alors, c'est un malheur pour vous, car, sur mon âme,
Je voulais cet anneau.
— Si vous me l'aviez dit,
Au moins !
— Et sur quoi donc t'en croirai-je, maudit
Sur quel honneur vas-tu me jurer ? sur laquelle
De tes deux mains de sang ? où la marque en est elle ?
La chose n'est pas sûre, et tu peux te vanter !
Il fallait lui couper la main, et l'apporter.
— Madame, il fassait nuit, la mer était prochaine . . .
Je l'ai jeté dedans.
— Je n'en suis pas certaine.
— Mais, madame, ce fer est chaud, et saigne encor !
— Ni le feu ni le sang ne sont rares !
— Son corps
N'est pas si loin, madame ; il se peut qu'on se charge . . .
— La nuit est trop épaisse, et l'Océan trop large !
— Mais je suis pâle, moi tenez !
— Mon cher abbé,
L'étais-je pas, ce soir, quand j'ai joué Thisbé,
Dans l'opéra ?
— Madame, au nom du ciel !
— Peut-être
Qu'en y regardant bien, vous l'aurez. . . . Ma fenêtre
Donne sur la mer.

(*Elle sort.*)

— Mais elle est partie ! . . . O Dieu !
J'ai tué mon ami, j'ai mérité le feu,
J'ai taché mon pourpoint, et l'on me congédie !
C'est la moralité de cette comédie."

The framework of this scene, far removed from it though it is by its form, is evidently copied from this scene in Racine's *Andromaque*:

" HERMIONE.

Je veux qu'à mon départ toute l'Épire pleure !
Mais, si vous me vengez, vengez-moi dans une heure.
Tous vos retardements sont pour moi des refus.
Courez au temple ! Il faut immoler . . .

ORESTE.

Qui ?

HERMIONE.

Pyrrhus !

— Pyrrhus, madame ?

— Hé quoi ! votre haine chancelle !
Ah ! courez, et craignez que je ne vous rappelle !

. . . . . .

Ne vous suffit-il pas que je l'ai condamné ?
Ne vous suffit-il pas que ma gloire offensée
Demande une victime à moi seule adressée ;
Qu'Hermione est le prix d'un tyran opprimé ;
Que je le hais ! enfin, seigneur, que je l'aimai ?
Malgré la juste horreur que son crime me donne,
Tant qu'il vivra, craignez que je ne lui pardonne !
Doutez jusqu'à sa mort d'un courroux incertain.
S'il ne meurt aujourd'hui je peux l'aimer demain !

. . . . . .

— Mais, madame, songez . . .

— Ah ! c'en est trop, seigneur
Tant de raisonnements offensent ma colère.
J'ai voulu vous donner les moyens de me plaire,
Rendre Oreste content ; mais, enfin, je vois bien
Qu'il veut toujours se plaindre, et ne mériter rien.
Je m'en vais seule au temple ou leur hymen s'apprête,
Où vous n'osez aller mériter ma conquête ;
Là, de mon ennemi je saurai m'approcher ;
Je percerai le cœur que je n'ai pu toucher,
Et mes sanglantes mains, sur moi-même tournées.
Aussitôt, malgré lui, joindront nos destinées ;
Et, tout ingrat qu'il est, il me sera plus doux
De mourir avec lui que de vivre avec vous !
— Non, je vous priverai de ce plaisir funeste,
Madame, il ne mourra que de la main d'Oreste !
Vos ennemis par moi vous vont être immolés,
Et vous reconnaîtrez mes soins, si vous voulez ! "

And Orestes departs, kills Pyrrhus, then returns with his bloody sword in his hand to find Hermione.

"— Madame, c'en est fait, et vous êtes servie :
Pyrrhus rend à l'autel son infidèle vie !
— Il est mort ? . . .
— Il expire, et nos Grecs, irrités,
Ont lavé dans son sang ses infidélités !
. . . . . .
Mais c'est moi dont l'ardeur leur a servi d'exemple ;
Je les ai pour vous seule entraînés dans le temple,
Madame, et vous pouvez justement vous flatter
D'une mort que leurs bras n'ont fait qu'exécuter :
Vous seule avez porté les coups !
— Tais-toi, perfide !
Et n'impute qu'à toi lâche parricide !
Va faire chez les Grecs admirer ta fureur,
Va ! je te désavoue, et tu me fais horreur ! . . .
Barbare ! qu'as-tu fait ? Avec quelle furie
As-tu tranché le cours d'une si belle vie ?
Avez-vous pu, cruels, l'immoler aujourd'hui,
Sans que tout votre sang se soulevât pour lui ?
Mais parle ! De son sort qui t'a rendu l'arbitre ?
Pourquoi l'assassiner ? qu'a-t-il fait ? à quel titre ?
Qui te l'a dit ?
— O dieux ! quoi ! ne m'avez-vous pas
Vous-même, ici, tantôt, ordonné son trépas ?
— Ah ! fallait-il en croire une amante insensé ? . . ."

It is the same passion, we see, in both women : Opera dancer and Spartan princess, they speak differently, but act in the same manner. True, both have copied la Chimène in the *Cid*. Don Sancho enters, sword in hand, and prostrates himself before Chimène.

"— Madame, à vos genoux j'apporte cette épée . . .
— Quoi ! du sang de Rodrigue encor toute trempée ?
Perfide ! oses-tu bien te montrer à mes yeux
Après m'avoir ôté ce que j'aimais le mieux ?
Éclate, mon amour ! tu n'as plus rien à craindre ;
Mon père est satisfait ; cesse de te contraindre !
Un même coup a mis ma gloire en sûreté,
Mon âme au désespoir, ma flamme en liberté !
— D'un esprit plus rassis . . .

— Tu me parles encore,
Exécrable assassin du héros que j'adore !
Va, tu l'as pris en traître ! Un guerrier si vaillant
N'eût jamais succombé sous un tel assaillant !
N'espère rien de moi ; tu ne m'as point servie ;
En croyant me venger, tu m'as ôté la vie ! . . ."

True, Corneille borrowed this scene from Guilhem de Castro, who took it from the romancers of the *Cid*. Now, the day I listened to that reading by Alfred de Musset, I had had already, for more than a year, a similar idea in my head. It had been suggested to me by the reading of Goethe's famous drama *Goetz von Berlichingen*. Three or four scenes are buried in that titanic drama, each of which seemed to me sufficient of themselves to make separate dramas. There was always the same situation of the woman urging the man she does not love to kill the one she loves, as Chimène in the *Cid*, as Hermione in *Andromaque*. The analysis of *Goetz von Berlichingen* would carry us too far afield, we will therefore be content to quote these three or four scenes from our friend Marmier's translation :

"ADÉLAÏDE, *femme de Weislingen ;* FRANTZ, *page de Weislingen.*

ADÉLAÏDE. — Ainsi, les deux expéditions sont en marche ?

FRANTZ. — Oui, madame, et mon maître a la joie de combattre vos ennemis. . . .

— Comment va-t-il ton maître ?

— A merveille ! il m'a chargé de vous baiser la main.

— La voici . . . Tes lèvres sont brûlantes !

— C'est ici que je brûle. (*Il met la main sur son cœur.*) Madame, vos domestiques sont les plus heureux des hommes ! . . . Adieu ! il faut que je reparte. Ne m'oubliez pas !

— Mange d'abord quelque chose, et prends un peu repos.

— A quoi bon ? Je vous ai vue, je ne me sens ni faim ni fatigue.

— Je sais que tu es un garçon plein de zèle.

— Oh ! madame !

— Mais tu n'y tiendrais pas . . . Repose-toi, te dis-je, et prends quelque nourriture.

— Que de soins pour un pauvre jeune homme !

— Il a les larmes aux yeux . . . Je l'aime de tout mon cœur ! Jamais personne ne m'a montré tant d'attachement !

ADÉLAÏDE, FRANTZ, *entrant une lettre à la main.*

FRANTZ.—Voici pour vous, madame.

ADÉLAÏDE.—Est-ce Charles lui-même qui te l'a remise?

— Oui.

— Qu'as-tu donc? Tu parais triste!

— Vous voulez absolument me faire périr de langueur . . . Oui, je mourrai dans l'âge de l'espérance, et c'est vous qui en serez cause!

— Il me fait de la peine . . . Il m'en coûterait si peu pour le rendre heureux! — Prends courage, jeune homme, je connais ton amour, ta fidélité; je ne serai point ingrate.

— Si vous en étiez capable, je mourrais! Mon Dieu! moi qui n'ai pas une goutte de sang qui ne soit à vous! moi qui n'ai de sens que pour vous aimer et pour obéir à ce que vous désirez!

— Cher enfant!

— Vous me flattez! et tout cela n'aboutit qu'a s'en voir préférer d'autres . . . Toutes vos pensées tournées vers Charles! . . . Aussi, je ne le veux plus . . . Non, je ne veux plus servir d'entremetteur!

— Frantz, tu t'oublies!

— Me sacrifier! . . . sacrifier mon maître! mon cher maître!

— Sortez de ma présence!

— Madame. . . .

— Va, dénonce-moi a ton cher maître . . . J'étais bien folle de te prendre pour ce que tu n'es pas.

— Chère noble dame, vous savez que je vous aime!

— Je t'aimais bien aussi; tu étais près de mon cœur . . . Va, trahis-moi!

— Je m'arracherais plutôt le sein! . . . Pardonnez-moi, madame; mon âme est trop pleine, je ne suis plus maître de moi!

— Cher enfant! excellent cœur!

(*Elle lui prend les mains, l'attire à elle; leurs bouches se rencontrent; il se jette à son cou en pleurant.*)

— Laisse-moi! . . . Les murs ont des yeux . . . Laisse-moi . . . *Elle se dégage.*) Aime-moi toujours ainsi; sois toujours aussi fidèle; la plus belle récompense t'attend! (*Elle sort.*)

— La plus belle récompense! Dieu, laisse-moi vivre jusque! . . . Si mon père me disputait cette place, je le tuerais!

WEISLINGEN, FRANTZ.

WEISLINGEN. — Frantz!

FRANTZ. — Monseigneur!

— Exécute ponctuellement mes ordres: tu m'en réponds sur ta vie. Remets-lui cette lettre; il faut qu'elle quitte la cour, et se retire dans

mon château à l'instant même. Tu la verras partir, et aussitôt tu reviendras m'annoncer son départ.

— Vos ordres seront suivis.

— Dis-lui bien qu'il faut qu'elle le veuille . . . Va !

ADÉLAIDE, FRANTZ.

(*Adélaïde tient à la main la lettre de son mari apportée par Frantz.*)

ADÉLAÏDE. — Lui ou moi ! . . . L'insolent ! me menacer ! Nous saurons le prévenir . . . Mais qui se glisse dans le salon ?

FRANTZ, *se jetant à son cou.* — Ah ! madame ! chère madame ! . . .

— Écervelé ! si quelqu'un t'avait entendu !

— Oh ! tout dort ! . . . tout le monde dort !

— Que veux-tu ?

— Je n'ai point de sommeil : les menaces de mon maître . . . votre sort . . . mon cœur . . .

— Il était bien en colère quand tu l'as quitté ?

— Comme jamais je ne l'ai vu ! 'Il faut qu'elle parte pour mon château ! a-t-il dit ; il faut qu'elle le veuille !'

— Et . . . nous obéirons ?

— Je n'en sais rien, madame.

— Pauvre enfant, dupe de ta bonne foi, tu ne vois pas où cela mène ! Il sait qu'ici je suis en sûreté . . . Ce n'est pas d'aujourd'hui qu'il en veut à mon indépendance . . . Il me fait aller dans ses domaines parce que, là, il aura le pouvoir de me traiter au gré de son aversion.

— Il ne le fera pas !

— Je vois dans l'avenir toute ma misère ! Je ne resterai pas longtemps dans son château : il m'en arrachera pour m'enfermer dans un cloître !

— O mort ! ô enfer !

— Me sauveras-tu ?

— Tout ! tout plutôt que cela !

— Frantz ! (*En pleurs et l'embrassant.*) Oh ! Frantz ! pour nous sauver. . . .

— Oui, il tombera . . . il tombera sous mes coups ! je le foulerai aux pieds !

— Point d'emportement ! Teins, remets-lui plutôt un billet plein de respect, où je l'assure de mon entière soumission à ses ordres . . . Et cette fiole . . . cette fiole, vide-la dans son verre.

— Donnez, vous serez libre !

WEISLINGEN, *puis* FRANTZ.

WEISLINGEN. — Je suis si malade, si faible ! . . . mes os sont brisés : une fièvre ardente en a consumé la moëlle ! Ni paix ni trêve, le jour comme la nuit . . . un mauvais sommeil agité de rêves empoisonnés. . . .

(*Il s'assied.*) Je suis faible, faible . . . Comme mes ongles sont bleus ! . . . Un froid glaciel circule dans mes veines, engourdit tous mes membres . . . Quelle sueur dévorante ! tout tourne autour de moi . . . Si je pouvais dormir ! . . .

FRANTZ, *entrant dans la plus grande agitation.*—Monseigneur !

— Eh bien ?

— Du poison . . . du poison de votre femme . . . Moi, c'est moi ! (*Il s'enfuit, ne pouvant en dire davantage.*)

— Il est dans le délire . . . Oh ! oui, je le sens . . . le martyre ! la mort. . . . (*Voulant se lever.*) Dieu ! je n'en puis plus ! je meurs ! . . . je meurs ! . . . et, pourtant, je ne puis cesser de vivre . . . Oh ! dans cet affreux combat de la vie et de la mort, il y a tous les supplices de l'enfer ! . . ."

Now that the reader has had placed before him all these various fragments from *Goetz von Berlichingen*, the *Cid*, *Andromaque* and the *Marrons du feu*, which the genius of four poets—Goethe, Corneille, Racine and Alfred de Musset—have given us, he will understand the analogy, the family likeness which exists between the different scenes; they are not entirely alike, but they are sisters.

Now, as I have said, these few passages from *Goetz von Berlichingen* had lain dormant in my memory; neither the *Cid* nor *Andromaque* had aroused them: the irregular, passionate, vivid poetry of Alfred de Musset galvanized them into life, and from that moment I felt I must put them to use.

About the same time, too, I read *Quentin Durward* and was much impressed by the character of Maugrabin; I had taken note of several of his phrases full of Oriental poetry. I decided to place my drama in the centre of the Middle Ages and to make my two principal personages, a lovely and austere lady of a manor and an Arab slave who, whilst sighing after his native land, is kept tied to the land of exile by a stronger chain than that of slavery. I therefore set to work to hunt about in chronicles of the fifteenth century to find a peg on which to hang my picture. I have always upheld the admirable adaptibility of history in this respect; it never leaves the poet in the lurch. Accordingly, my way of dealing with history is a curious one. I begin by making up a story; I try to make it romantic, tender and dramatic, and, when

sentiment and imagination are duly provided, I hunt through history for a framework in which to set them, and it is invariably the case that history furnishes me with such a setting; a setting so perfect and so exactly suited to the subject, that it seems as though the frame had been made to fit the picture, and not the picture to fit the frame. And, once more, chance favoured me and was more than kind. See what I found on page five of the *Chronicles of King Charles VII.*, by Maître Alain Chartier homme très-honorable:

"And at that time, it happened to a knight called Messire Charles de Savoisy that one of his horse-boys, in riding a horse to let him drink at the river, bespattered a scholar, who, with others, was going in procession to Saint Katherine, to such an extent that the scholar struck the said horse-boy; and, then, the servants of the aforesaid knight sallied forth from his castle armed with cudgels, and followed the said scholars right away to Saint Katherine; and one of the servants of the aforesaid knight shot an arrow into the church as far as to the high altar, where the priest was saying Mass; then, for this fact, the University made such a pursuit after the said knight, that the house of the said knight was smitten down, and the said knight was banished from the kingdom of France and excommunicated. He betook himself to the pope, who gave him absolution, and he armed four galleys and went over the seas, making war on the Saracens, and there gained much possessions. Then he returned and made his peace, and rebuilt his house in Paris, in fashion as before; but he was not yet finished, and caused his house of Signelay (Seignelais) in Auxerrois to be beautifully built by the Saracens whom he had brought from across the sea; the which château is three leagues from Auxerre."

It will be seen that history had thought of everything for me, and provided me with a frame which had been waiting for its picture for four hundred years.

It was to this event, related in the *Chronicle* of Maître Alain Chartier, that Yaqoub alludes when he says to Bérengère:

> "Malheureux? . . . malheureux, en effet;
> Car, pour souffrir ainsi, dites-moi, qu'ai-je fait? . . .
> Est-ce ma faute, à moi, si votre époux et maître,
> Poursuivant un vassal, malgré les cris du prêtre,

Entra dans une église, et, là, d'un coup mortel,
Le frappa? Si le sang jaillit jusqu'à l'autel,
Est-ce ma faute? Si sa colère imbécile,
Oublia que l'église était un lieu d'asile,
Est-ce ma faute? Et si, par l'Université,
A venger ce forfait le saint-père excité,
Dit que, pour désarmer le céleste colère,
Il fallait que le comte armât une galère,
Et, portant sur nos bords la désolation,
Nous fît esclaves, nous, en expiation,
Est-ce ma faute encore? et puis-je pas me plaindre
Qu'au fond de mon désert son crime aille m'atteindre? . . ."

This skeleton found, and my drama now having, so to speak, in the characters of Savoisy, Bérengère and Yaqoub, its head, heart and legs, it was necessary to provide arms, muscles, flesh and the rest of its anatomy. Hence the need of history; and history had in reserve Charles VII., Agnes and Dunois; and the whole of the great struggle of France against England was made to turn on the love of an Arab for the wife of the man who had made him captive and transported him from Africa to France. I think I have exposed, with sufficient clearness, what I borrowed as my foundation, from Goethe, Corneille, Racine and Alfred de Musset; I will make them more palpable still by quotations; for, as I have got on the subject of self-criticism, I may as well proceed to the end, rather than remain before my readers, *solus*, *pauper et nudus*, as Adam in the Earthly Paradise, or as Noah under his vine-tree!

"BÉRENGÈRE, YAQOUB.

— Yaqoub, si vos paroles
Ne vous échappent point comme des sons frivoles,
Vous m'avez dit ces mots: 'S'il était, par hasard,
Un homme dont l'aspect blessât votre regard;
Si ses jours sur vos jours avaient cette influence
Que son trépas pût seul finir votre souffrance;
De Mahomet lui-même eût-il reçu ce droit,
Quand il passe, il faudrait me le montrer du doigt
Vous avez dit cela?
— Je l'ai dit . . . Je frissonne
Mais un homme par moi fut excepté.

— Personne.
— Un homme à ma vengeance a le droit d'échapper . . .
— Si c'était celui-là qu'il te fallût frapper?
S'il fallait que sur lui la vengeance fût prompte? . . .
— Son nom?
— Le comte.
— Enfer? je m'en doutais; le comte?
— Entendez-vous? le comte! . . . Eh bien?
— Je ne le puis!
— Adieu donc pour toujours!
— Restez, ou je vous suis.
— J'avais cru jusqu'ici, quelle croyance folle!
Que les chrétiens eux seuls manquaient à leur parole.
Je me trompais, c'est tout.
— Madame . . .
— Laissez-moi?
Oh! mais vous mentiez donc?
— Vous savez bien pourquoi
Ma vengeance ne peut s'allier à la vôtre:
Il m'a sauvé la vie . . . Oh! nommez-moi tout autre!
. . . . . .
Un instant, Bérengère, écoutez-moi!
— J'écoute:
Dites vite.
— J'ai cru, je me trompais sans donte,
Qu'ici vous m'aviez dit, ici même . . . Pardon!
— Quoi?
— Que vous m'aimiez!
— Oui, je l'ai dit.
— Eh bien, donc,
Puisque même destin, même amour nous rassemble,
Bérengère, ce soir . . .
— Eh bien?
— Fuyons ensemble!
— Sans frapper?
— Ses remords vous vengeront-ils pas?
— Esclave, me crois-tu le cœur placé si bas,
Que je puisse souffrir qu'en ce monde où nous sommes,
J'aie été tour à tour l'amante de deux hommes,
Dont le premier m'insulte, et que tous deux vivront,
Sans que de celui-là m'ait vengé le second?
Crois-tu que, dans un cœur ardent comme le nôtre,
Un amour puisse entrer sans qu'il dévore l'autre?
Si tu l'as espéré, l'espoir est insultant!
— Bérengère!

— Entre nous, tout est fini . . . Va-t'en !
— Grâce ! . . .
— Je sauroi bien trouver, pour cette tâche,
Quelque main moins timide et quelque âme moins lâche,
Qui fera pour de l'or ce que, toi, dans ce jour,
Tu n'auras pas osé faire pour de l'amour !
Et, s'il n'en était pas, je saurais bien moi-même,
De cet assassinat affrontant l'anathème,
Me glisser au milieu des femmes, des valets,
Qui flattent les époux de leurs nouveaux souhaits,
Et les faire avorter, ces souhaits trop prècoces,
En vidant ce flacon dans la coupe des noces !
— Du poison ?
— Du poison ! Mais ne viens plus, après,
Esclave, me parler d'amour et de regrets !
Refuses-tu toujours ? . . . Il te reste un quart d'heure.
C'est encore plus de temps qu'il n'en faut pour qu'il meure,
Un quart d'heure ! . . Réponds, mourra-t-il de ta main ?
Es-tu prêt ? Réponds-moi, car j'y vais. Dis !
— Demain !
— Demain ! Et, cette nuit, dans cette chambre même,
Ainsi qu'il me l'a dit, il lui dira : Je t'aime !
Demain ! Et, d'ici là, que ferai-je ? Ah ! tu veux,
Cette nuit, qu'à deux mains j'arrache mes cheveux ;
Que je brise mon front à toutes les murailles ;
Que je devienne folle ? Ah ! demain ! mais tu railles !
Et si ce jour était le dernier de nos jours ?
Si cette nuit d'enfer allait durer toujours ?
Dieu le peut ordonner, si c'est sa fantaisie.
Demain ? Et si je suis morte de jalousie ?
Tu n'es donc pas jaloux, toi ? tu ne l'es donc pas ?"

I refrain from quoting the rest of the scene, the methods employed being, I believe, those peculiar to myself. Yaqoub yields : he dashes into the Comte's chamber ; Bérengère flings herself behind a prie-Dieu ; the Comte passes by with his new wife ; he enters his room ; a shriek is heard.

"BÉRENGÈRE, *puis* YAQOUB *et* LE COMTE.

BÉRENGÈRE.

Le voilà qui tombe !
Savoisy, retiens-moi ma place dans ta tombe !
(*Elle avale le poison qu'elle avait montré à Yaqoub.*)

YAQOUB.

. . . Fuyons ! il vient
(*Le comte paraît, sanglant et se cramponnant à la tapisserie.*)

LE COMTE.

C'est toi.
Yaqoub, qui m'as tué !

BÉRENGÈRE.

Ce n'est pas lui : c'est moi !

LE COMTE.

Bérengère ! . . . Au secours ! Je meurs !

YAQOUB.

Maintenant, femme,
Fais-moi tout oublier, car c'est vraiment infâme !
Viens donc ! . . . Tu m'as promis de venir . . . Je t'attends . .
D'être à moi pour toujours !

BÉRENGÈRE.

Encor quelques instants,
Et je t'appartiendrai tout entière.

YAQOUB.

Regarde !
Ils accourent aux cris qu'il a poussés . . . Prends garde,
Nous ne pourrons plus fuir, il ne sera plus temps.
Ils viennent, Bérengère !

BÉRENGÈRE.

Attends, encore, attends !

YAQOUB.

Oh ! viens, viens ! toute attente à cette heure est mortelle !
La cour est pleine, vois . . . Mais viens donc ! . . . Que fait-elle ?
Bérengère, est-ce ainsi que tu gardes ta foi !
Bérengère, entends-tu ? viens !

BÉRENGÈRE, *rendant le dernier soupir.*

Me voici . . . Prends moi

YAQOUB.

Oh! malédiction! . . . son front devient livide . . .
Son cœur? . . . Il ne bat plus! . . . Sa main? Le flacon vide! . . ."

It will be seen that this contains three imitations; the imitation of Racine's *Andromaque*; that of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*; and that of Alfred de Musset's *Marrons de feu*. The reason is that *Charles VII.* is, first of all, a study, a laboriously worked up study and not a work done on the spur of the moment; it is a work of assimilation and not an original drama, which cost me infinitely more labour than *Antony*; but it does not therefore mean that I love it as much as *Antony*. Yet a few more words before I finish the subject. Let us run through the imitations in detail. I said I borrowed different passages from Maugrabin in *Quentin Durward*. Here they are:—

"'Unhappy being!' Quentin Durward exclaims. 'Think better! . . . What canst thou expect, dying in such opinions, and impenitent?'

"'To be resolved into the elements,' said the hardened atheist; my hope, trust and expectation is, that the mysterious frame of humanity shall melt into the general mass of nature, to be recompounded in the other forms with which she daily supplies those which daily disappear, and return under different forms,—the watery particles to streams and showers, the earthly parts to enrich their mother earth, the airy portions to wanton in the breeze; and those of fire to supply the blaze of Aldeboran and his brethren—In this faith have I lived, and I will die in it!'"

Yaqoub is condemned to death for having killed Raymond the Comte's archer.

"LE COMTE.

Esclave, si tu meurs en de tels sentiments,
Q'espères-tu?

YAQOUB.

De rendre un corps aux éléments,
Masse commune où l'homme, en expirant, rapporte
Tout ce qu'en le créant la nature en emporte.

Si la terre, si l'eau, si l'air et si le feu
Me formèrent, aux mains du hasard ou de Dieu,
La vent, en dispersant ma poussière en sa course,
Saura bien reporter chaque chose à sa source!"

The second imitation examined in detail is again borrowed from Walter Scott, but from *The Talisman* this time, not from *Quentin Durward*. The Knight of the Leopard and the Saracen, after fighting against one another, effect a truce, and take lunch, chatting together, by the fountain called the Diamond of the Desert.

"'Stranger,' asked the Saracen,—'with how many men didst thou come on this warfare?'

"'By my faith,' said Sir Kenneth, 'with aid of friends and kinsmen, I was hardly pinched to furnish forth ten well-appointed lances, with maybe some fifty more men, archers and varlets included.'

"'Christian, here I have five arrows in my quiver, each feathered from the wing of an eagle. When I send one of them to my tents, a thousand warriors mount on horseback. When I send another, an equal force will arise—for the five, I can command five thousand men; and if I send my bow, ten thousand mounted riders will shake the desert.'"

"YAQOUB.

Car mon père, au Saïd, n'est point un chef vulgaire.
Il a dans son carquois quatre flèches de guerre,
Et, lorsqu'il tend son arc, et que, vers quatre buts,
Il le lance en signal à ses quatre tribus,
Chacune à lui fournir cent cavaliers fidèles
Met le temps que met l'aigle à déployer ses ailes."

There, thank Heaven, my confession is ended! It has been a long one; but then *Charles VII.*, as an assimilative and imitative work, is my greatest sin in that respect.

CHAPTER XIV

Poetry is the Spirit of God—The Conservatoire and l'École of Rome—Letter of counsel to my Son—Employment of my time at Trouville—Madame de la Garenne—The Vendéan Bonnechose—M. Beudin—I am pursued by a fish—What came of it

IF I had not just steeped my readers in literature, during the preceding chapters, I should place a work before them which might not perhaps be uninteresting to them. It would be the ancient tradition of *Phèdre*, which is to Euripides, for example, what the Spanish romancer's is to Guilhem de Castro. Then I would show what Euripides borrowed from tradition; then what, five hundred years later, the *Roman* Seneca borrowed from Euripides; then finally, what, sixteen centuries later still, the *French* Racine borrowed from both Euripides and Seneca. At the same time I should show how the genius of each nation and the emotional taste of each age brought about changes from the original character of the subject. One last word. Amongst all peoples, literature always begins with poetry; prose only comes later. Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod—Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle.

"In the beginning, says Genesis, God created the heavens. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the *Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*"

Poetry is the Spirit of God, or, rather, it is primeval poetic substance, impersonal and common property; it floats in space like the cosmic essence of which Humboldt speaks, a kind of luminous matter, mother of old worlds, germ of worlds to come; indestructible, because it is incessantly being

renewed, each element faithfully giving back to it that which it has borrowed.

Gradually, however, this matter settles round the great personalities, as clouds settle round great mountains, and in like manner as clouds dissolve into springs of living waters, spreading over plains, satisfying bodily thirst, so does this cosmic element resolve itself into poetry, hymns, songs and tragedies which satisfy the thirst of the soul. The inference to be drawn from the foregoing analogy is, that human genius creates and individual genius applies. Thus, when a critic happened to accuse Shakespeare of having taken a scene or phrase or idea from a contemporary writer, he said: "I have but rescued a child from evil company to put it among better companions." Again, Molière answered, even more naively still, when people made the same reproach with regard to him: "I take my treasure wherever I find it!" Now, Shakespeare and Molière were right: the man of genius—need I point out that I mean the great masters, not myself? (I am well aware that I shall not be of any importance until after my death!)—the man of genius, I repeat, does not steal, he conquers: he makes a colony, as it were, of the province he takes; he imposes his own laws upon it and peoples it with his own subjects; he extends his golden sceptre over it, and not a soul, seeing his fine kingdom, dares to say to him (except, of course, the jealous, who are subject to no one and will not recognise even genius as supreme ruler), "This portion of territory does not belong to your patrimony." It is an absurd notion that this arbitrary spirit should accord its protection to letters: it means that it prohibits foreign literature and discourages contemporary literature. In a country like France, which is the brain of Europe, and whose language is spoken throughout the whole world, owing to the equipoise of consonants and vowels, which disconcert neither northern nor southern nations, there ought to be a universal literature besides its national one. Everything of beauty that has been produced in the whole world, from Æschylus down to Alfieri, from *Sakountala* to *Romeo*, from the romancero of the *Cid*

down to Schiller's *Brigands*,—all ought to belong to France, if not by right of inheritance, at least by right of conquest. Nothing that an entire people has admired can be without value, and everything that has a value ought to find its place in that vast casket entitled French intelligence. It is on account of this false system that there is a Conservatoire and an École at Rome. We have already, in connection with the *mise-en-scène* of Soulié's *Juliette*, said a few words about this Conservatoire, which has the unique object of teaching young men to scan Molière and to recite Racine's *Corneille*. We will now complete the sketch begun. As a result of the invariable programme, adopted by the government, every pupil of the Conservatoire, after three years' study, leaves the rue Bergère incapable of appreciating any modern or foreign literature; acquainted with the *songe* of Athalie, the *récit* of Théramène, the monologue of Auguste, the scene between Tartuffe and Elmire, that of the Misanthrope and Oronte, of Gros-René and Marinette; he is completely ignorant that there existed at Athens people of the names of Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles and Aristophanes; at Rome, Ennius, Plautus, Terence and Seneca; in England, Shakespeare, Otway, Sheridan and Byron; in Germany, Goethe, Schiller, Uhland and Kotzebue; in Spain, Guillem de Castro, Tirso de Molina, Calderon and Lope de Vega; in Italy, Macchiavelli, Goldoni, Alfieri; that these men have left a trail of light across twenty-four centuries and among five different peoples, consisting of stars called *Orestes*, *Alcestis*, *Œdipus at Colonus*, *The Knights*, *Aulularia*, *Eunuchus*, *Hippolytus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Venice Preserved*, *The School for Scandal*, *Manfred*, *Goetz von Berlichingen*, *Kabale und Liebe*, *les Pupilles*, *Menschenhass und Reue*, *The Cid*, *Don Juan*, *le Chien du Jardinier*, *le Médecin de son honneur*, *le Meilleur Alcade c'est le Roi*, *la Mandragora*, *le Bourra bienfaisant*, *and Philippe II.* You will see that I only quote one masterpiece by each of these men; also that the pupils of the Conservatoire are utterly ignorant, behind the times and of no use on any stage except those which play Molière, Racine and Corneille. And,

furthermore! . . . None of the great actors of our time have come from the Conservatoire; neither Talma, nor Mars, Firmin, Potier, Vernet, Bouffé, Rachel, Frédérick-Lemaître, Bocage, Dorval, Mélingue, Arnal, Numa, Bressant, Déjazet, Rose Chéri, Duprez, Masset, nor any prominent person whatsoever. What is to be said about a mill which goes round and says tic-tac but does not grind?

Ah! well, the same vice exists in the École of Rome as in the Conservatoire. If there is a changeable art it is that of painting. Each artist sees a colour which is not that of his neighbour; one calls it green, another yellow, another blue, another red: one inclines towards the Flemish School, another to the Spanish and yet another to the German. You would think they would send each student, according as his bent might be, to study Rubens at Anvers, Murillo at Madrid, Cornelius at Munich? Nothing of the sort! They all go to Rome to study Raphael or Michael Angelo! Not a painter, not a single original sculptor of our time was a pupil at Rome; neither Delacroix, nor Rousseau, Diaz, Dupré, Cabot, Boulanger, Müller, Isabey, Brascassat, Giraud, Barrye, Clésinger, Gavarni, Rosa Bonheur, nor . . . upon my word, I was tempted to say—nor anybody! But as the institution is absurd it will still continue to exist. With half the money to spend they could turn out twice as many actors, painters and sculptors; only, they would turn them out capable instead of incapable.

We have travelled a long way from Trouville! What would you have me do? Fancy has the wings of Icarus, the horses of Hippolytus: she goes as far as she dare towards the sun, as near as she dare without dashing herself against the rocks. Let us return to *Charles VII.*, the first cause of all this digression. Whatever may have been the cause; when I returned to Mother Oseraie's inn, at nine o'clock on the evening of 7 July, I wrote the first lines of that scene. By the following morning, the first hundred lines of the drama were done, and among them were the thirty-six or thirty-eight relating Yaqoub's lion hunt. They should rank among the few really good lines I

have written. On the other hand, in order that an exact idea may be formed of the value I put upon my own poetry, I may be allowed to transcribe here a letter which I wrote, fifteen or sixteen years ago, to my son, who asked my advice on the poetry he ought to read and on the ancient and modern poets he ought to study.

"My dear Boy,—Your letter gave me great pleasure, as every letter from you does which shows you are doing what is right. You ask me the use of the Latin verses—which you are forced to compose; they are not very important; nevertheless, you learn metre by so doing, and that enables you to scan properly and to understand the music of Virgil's poetry and the freedom and ease of Horace. Again, this habit of scanning will come in useful, if you ever have to talk Latin in Hungary, where every peasant speaks it. Learn Greek steadily and thoroughly, so as to be able to read Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes in the original, and you will then be able to learn modern Greek in three months. Practise yourself well in the pronunciation of German; later you will learn English and Italian. Then, when you know all these, we will decide together what career you shall follow. At the same time do not neglect drawing. Tell Charlieu to give you not only Shakespeare but Dante and Schiller as well. Do not place much reliance on the verses they make you read at school: professor's verses are not worth a sou! Study the Bible, as a religious book, a history and a poem; Sacy's translation, although very poor, is the best; look for the magnificent poetry contained beneath all those ambiguous veilings and obscurities; in Saul and Joseph, and especially in Job, a poem which is one long human wail. Read Corneille; learn portions of him by heart. Corneille is not always poetical, he is at times petti-fogging; but he always uses fine, picturesque and concise language. Tell Charpentier, from me, to give you André Chénier: he is the poet of solitude and the night, akin to the nightingales. Charpentier lives in the rue de Seine; you can get his address from Buloz. Tell Collin to give you, through Hachette, four volumes entitled, *Rome au Siècle d'Auguste*; it is a dry but learned work on ancient times. Read all Hugo; read Lamartine, but only the *Méditations* and the *Harmonies*. Then write an essay on the passages you think beautiful and those you think bad; and show it to me on my return. Finally,

always keep yourself occupied, and rest yourself by the variety of your occupations. Take care of your health *and be wise.* Good-bye, my dear lad. I told D—— to give you twenty francs for a New Year's gift. ALEXANDRE DUMAS"

P.S.—Tell Collin that, as soon as my piece is received, I will write to Buloz to arrange the business of his introduction to the Théâtre-Français. Go to Tresse, at the Palais-Royal; get from him at my expense the poems of Hugo, and his dramas, and Molière of the Panthéon; the Lamartine I will give you on my return. Read Molière often, much, always; with Saint-Simon and Madame Sévigné he is the supreme type of the language of the time of Louis XIV. Learn by heart certain passages of *Tartuffe*, the *Femmes savantes* and the *Misanthrope*: there have been and there will be other masterpieces of style, but nothing will ever exceed these in beauty. Learn by heart the monologue of Charles Quint from *Hernani*, all *Marion Delorme*, the monologue of Saint-Vallier and that of Triboulet in *Le Roi s'amuse*, the speech of Angelo on Venice; in conclusion, although I have few things to mention in comparison with the works I have just pointed out to you, learn the recital of Stella, in my *Caligula*; Yaqoub's lion-hunt, as well as the whole scene between the Comte, the King and Agnes Sorel, in the third act of *Charles VII.* Read de Vigny's *Othello* and *Roméo*; read de Musset without being carried away by his great facility and his inaccuracy, which in him might almost be reckoned a virtue, but which, in another, would be a serious fault. These are the ancient and modern writers I advise you to study. Later you shall pass on from these to a wider range. Adieu, you see I am treating you as though you were a grown-up youth and reasoning with you. You will soon be fifteen, and what I have said is quite easy to understand —your health, your health before all things: health is the foundation of everything in your future, and especially of talent.

"A. D."

I hope the sincerity and impartiality of my opinion upon others will be believed, when it is seen with what sincerity and impartiality I speak of myself.

From that day our life began to assume the uniformity and monotony of the life of the waters. I bethought me that I ought to introduce myself to the mayor, M. Guétier, a brave

and excellent man, who I believe played a somewhat active part in 1848, in the embarking of King Louis-Philippe. He gave me free leave to hunt over the communal marshes, which leave I took advantage of from that very day. The rising sun shot through the window of my room, and, although the curtains were drawn, it woke me in my bed. I opened my eyes, stretched out my hand for my pencil and set to work. At ten o'clock, Mother Oseraie came and told us breakfast was ready; at eleven, I took my gun and shot three or four snipe; at two, I began work again until four; at four, I went for a swim till five; and at half-past five dinner was ready for us; from seven until nine o'clock we went for a walk on the shore; at nine o'clock work was begun again and continued until eleven o'clock or midnight. *Charles VII.* advanced at the rate of a hundred lines per day. Undiscovered though Trouville was, nevertheless a few Normandy, Vendéan or Breton bathers came there. Among these was a charming woman, accompanied by her husband and her son; I remember nothing more about her than her name and face: she was gracious and prepossessing in expression, with a slightly aristocratic air; her name was Madame de la Garenne. From the day of her arrival, directly she knew I was living at the hotel, she began the preliminaries of making an acquaintanceship by boldly lending me her album. I had just finished the great scene in the third act between the Comte de Savoisy and Charles VII., and I copied it out for her, newly born from my brain. A good sort of young fellow had come with them, who concealed some degree of knowledge and great determination under the retiring air of a country gentleman. He was a sportsman, which similarity of tastes rapidly made us congenial companions if not exactly friends. He was the unfortunate Bonnechose, who was hung during the Vendéan insurrection of 1832. Whilst we were walking and hunting in the marsh lands round Trouville, Madame la Duchesse de Berry obtained permission from King Charles X. to make an attempt on France, under the title of regent; she left Edinburgh, went through Holland, stayed a day or two at Mayence, and the

same at Frankfort, crossed the frontier of Switzerland and entered Piedmont; then, finally, under the name of the Comtesse de Sagana, she stopped at Sestri, a small town a dozen leagues from Genoa, in the provinces of King Charles-Albert. Thus, all unsuspected by Bonnechose, death was postponed for one year! Meantime, the report began to spread in Paris that a new seaport had been discovered between Honfleur and la Délivrande. The result was that from time to time a venturesome bather would arrive who would ask timidly, "Is there a village called Trouville about here, and is that it with the belfry tower?" And I would reply *yes*, to my great regret: for I foresaw the time when Trouville would become another Dieppe or Boulogne or Ostend. I was not mistaken. Alas! Trouville has now ten inns; and land which could be bought at a hundred francs the arpent,[1] to-day fetches five francs per foot. One day among these venturesome bathers, these wandering tourists, these navigators without compass, there arrived a man of twenty-eight to thirty years of age, who gave out that his name was Beudin and that he was a banker. On the very evening of his arrival I was bathing a long distance off in the sea, when about ten yards from me, on the crest of a wave, I perceived a fish which realised the dream of Marécot in the *Ours et le Pacha*—that is to say, it was a huge enormous fish such as one scarcely ever sees, the like of which many never have seen. Had I possessed a little more vanity, I might have taken it for a dolphin and imagined it had taken me for another Arion; but I simply took it for a fish of gigantic proportions, and, I confess, its proximity disturbed me—I set to work to swim to the shore as hard as I could. I was a good swimmer, in those days, but my neighbour, the fish, could swim still better; accordingly, without any apparent effort, it followed me, always keeping an equal distance from me. Two or three times, feeling fatigued—mostly from want of breath—I thought of taking to my feet, but I was afraid of becoming nervous if I found too

[1] TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—An old French measure varying in different provinces from 3 roods to 2 English acres.

great a depth of water beneath me. I therefore continued to swim until my knees ploughed into the sand. The other swimmers were looking at me in astonishment; my fish was following me as though I held it in leash. When I got to the point of touching the sand with my knees I stood up. My fish made somersault after somersault and seemed overjoyed with satisfaction. I turned round and looked at it more closely and calmly. I saw it was a porpoise. Instantly I ran to Mother Oseraie's house. I ran through the village just as I was, in my bathing drawers. Although Mother Oseraie was not very impressionable, she was not accustomed to receive travellers in so light a costume and she uttered a cry.

"Don't mind me, Mother Oseraie," I said to her, "I have come to get my gun."

"Good Lord!" she said, "are you going to hunt in the happy hunting fields?"

Had I been in less of a hurry, I would have stopped and complimented her on her wit; but I only thought of the porpoise. Upon the stairs I met Madame de la Garenne; the staircase was very narrow and I drew aside to let her pass. I thought of asking how her husband and son were, but I reflected that the moment for holding a conversation was ill-chosen. Madame de la Garenne passed by and I flew into my room and seized hold of my carbine. The chamber-maid was making my bed.

"Ah! monsieur, instead of taking your gun hadn't you better take some clothes?"

It seemed as though my costume inspired wit in all who saw me. I ran full tilt down the road to the sea. My porpoise was still turning somersaults. I went up to my waist in the water until I was about fifty feet from him; I was afraid I might frighten him if I went any nearer; besides, I was just at the right range. I took aim and fired. I heard the dull sound of the ball penetrating the flesh. The porpoise dived and disappeared. Next day, the fishermen found it dead among the mussel-covered rocks. The bullet had entered a little below the eye and gone through the head.

CHAPTER XV

Why M. Beudin came to Trouville—How I knew him under another name—Prologue of a drama—What remained to be done—Division into three parts—I finish *Charles VII.*—Departing from Trouville—In what manner I learn of the first performance of *Marion Delorme*

THE night of that adventure, the fresh bather came up to me and complimented me on my skill. It was an excuse for beginning a conversation. We sat out on the beach and chatted. After a few remarks had been exchanged he said to me:

"Well! there is one thing you have no idea of."

"What is that?" I asked.

"That I have come here almost on your account."

"How so?"

"You do not recognise me under my name of Beudin?"

"I confess I do not."

"But you may, perhaps, recognise me under that of Dinaux?"

"What! Victor Ducange's collaborator!"

"Exactly."

"The same who wrote *Trente ans ou la vie d'un Joueur* with him?"

"That was I . . . or rather us."

"Why us?"

"There were two of us: Goubaux and myself."

"Ah! I knew Goubaux; he is a man of boundless merit."

"Thanks!"

"Pardon . . . one cannot be skilful both with gun and in conversation . . . With the gun, now, I should not have missed you!"

"You have not missed me as it is; in the first shot you brought me down by saying that Goubaux was a clever man and that I was an idiot!"

"Confess that you never thought I meant anything of the kind?"

"Upon my word, no!" And we burst out laughing.

"Well," I resumed, "as you probably did not hunt me out to receive the compliment I have just given you, tell me why you did."

"To talk to you about a play which Goubaux and I did not feel equal to bringing to a satisfactory conclusion, but which, in your hands, would become—plus the style—equal to the *Joueur*."

I bowed my thanks.

"No, upon my word of honour, I am certain the idea will take your fancy!" continued Beudin.

"Have you any part done or is it still in a nebulous state?"

"We have done the prologue, which is in quite a tangible shape. . . . But, as for the rest, you must help us to do it."

"Have you the prologue with you?"

"No, nothing is written down yet; but I can relate it to you."

"I am listening."

"The scene is laid in Northumberland, about 1775. An old physician whom, if you will, we will call Dr. Grey and his wife separate, the wife to go to bed, the husband to work part of the night. Scarcely has the wife closed the door of her room, before a carriage stops under the doctor's windows and a man inquires for a doctor. Dr. Grey reveals his profession; the travellers asks hospitality for some one who cannot go any further. The doctor opens his door and a masked man, carrying a woman in his arms, enters upon the scene, telling the postilion to unharness the horses and hide both them and the carriage."

"Bravo! the beginning is excellent! . . . We can picture the masked man and the sick woman."

The woman is near her confinement; her lover is carrying

her away and they are on their way to embark at Shields when the pangs of childbirth come upon the fugitive; it is important to conceal all trace of her; her father, who is the all-powerful ambassador of Spain in London, is in pursuit of her. The doctor attends to them with all haste: he points out a room to the masked man who carries the patient into it; then he rouses his wife to help him to attend to the sick woman. At this moment they hear the sound of a carriage passing at full gallop. The cries of the woman call the doctor to her side; the masked man comes back on the stage, not having the courage to witness his mistress's sufferings. After a short time the doctor rushes to find his guest: the unknown woman has just given birth to a boy, and mother and child are both doing well."

The narrator interrupted himself.

"Do you think," he asked me, "that this scene would be possible on the stage?"

"Why not? It was possible in Terence's day."

"In what way?"

"Thus:

"PAMPHILA.

Miseram me! differor doloribus!
Juno Lucina, fer opem! Serva me, obsecro!

REGIO.

Numnam illa, quæso, parturit? . . . Hem!

PAMPHILA.

Oh! unhappy wretch! My pains overcome me!
Juno Lucina, come to my aid! save me, I entreat thee.

REGIO.

Hullo, I say, is she about to be confined?"

"Is that in Terence?"

"Certainly."

"Then we are saved!"

"I quite believe it! It is as purely classical as *Amphitryon* and *l'Avare*."

"I will proceed, then."

"And I will listen!"

"Just as the masked man is rushing into the chamber of the sick woman, there is a violent knocking at Dr. Grey's door. 'Who is there? Open in the name of the law!' It is the father, a constable and two police-officers. The doctor is obliged to admit that he has given shelter to the two fugitives; the father declares that he will carry his daughter away instantly. The doctor opposes in the name of humanity and his wife; the father insists; the doctor then informs him of the condition of the sick woman, and both beg him to be merciful to her. Fury of the father, who completely ignores the situation. At that moment, the masked man comes joyfully out of the sick-room and is aghast to see the father of the woman he has carried off; the father leaps at his throat and demands his arrest. The noise of the struggle reaches the *accouchée*, who comes out half-fainting and falls at her father's feet: she vows she will follow her lover everywhere, even to prison; that he is her husband in the eyes of men. The father again and more energetically calls into requisition the assistance of the constable and takes his daughter in his arms to carry her away. The doctor and his wife implore in vain. The masked man comes forward in his turn . . . and the act finishes there; stay, I have outlined the last scene . . . Let us suppose that the masked man has assumed the name of Robertson, that the father is called Da Sylva and the young lady Caroline:—

"ROBERTSON, *putting his hand on Da Sylva's shoulder.*—Leave her alone.

CAROLINE.—Oh, father! . . . my Robertson! . . .

DA SYLVA.—Thy Robertson, indeed! . . . Look, all of you and I will show you who thy Robertson is . . . Off with that mask." (He snatches it from Robertson's face).—"Look he is . . ."

"ROBERTSON.—Silence; in the name of and for the sake of your daughter."

"You understand," Beudin went on "he quickly puts his mask on again, so quickly that nobody, except the audience whom he is facing, has time to see his countenance."

"Well; after that?"

"After?"

"You are right," says Da Sylva; "she alone shall know who you are. . . . This man."

"Well?" asks Caroline anxiously.

"This man," says Da Sylva leaning close to his daughter's ear; "this man is the executioner!"

"Caroline shrieks and falls. That is the end of the prologue."

"Wait a bit," I said, "surely I know something similar to that . . . yes . . . no. Yes, in the *Chronicles of the Canongate!*"

"Yes; it was, in fact, Walter Scott's novel which gave us the idea for our play."

"Well, but what then? There is no drama in the remainder of the novel."

"No. . . . So we depart completely from it here."

"Good! And when we leave it what follows?"

"There is an interval of twenty-six years. The stage represents the same room; only, everything has grown older in twenty-six years, personages, furniture and hangings. The man whose face the audience saw, and whom Da Sylva denounced in a whisper to his daughter, as the executioner, is playing chess with Dr. Grey; Mrs. Grey is sewing; Richard, the child of the prologue, is standing up writing; Jenny, the doctor's daughter, watches him as he writes."

"Stay, that idea of everybody twenty-six years older is capital."

"And then?"

"Ah! plague take it! That is all there is," said Beudin.

"What, you stop there?"

"Yes . . . the deuce! you know well enough that if the play were concluded we should not want your assistance!"

"Quite so . . . but still, you must have some idea concerning the rest of the play?"

"Yes . . . Richard has grown up under his father's care.

Richard is ambitious, and wants to become a member of the House of Commons. Dr. Grey's influence can help him: he pretends to be in love with his daughter . . . We will have the spectacle of an English election, which will be out of the common."

"And then?"

"Well then, you must invent the rest."

"But, come, that means that there is nearly the whole thing to finish!"

"Yes, very nearly . . . But that won't trouble you!"

"That's all very well; but, at this moment, I am busy on my drama, *Charles VII.*, and I cannot give my mind to anything else."

"Oh! there is no desperate hurry for it! meantime Goubaux will work away at it whilst I will do likewise . . . You like the idea?"

"Yes."

"All right! when you return to Paris we will have a meeting at your house or at mine or at Goubaux's and we will fix our plans."

"Granted, but on one condition."

"What?"

"That it shall be under your names and I shall remain behind the curtain."

"Why so?"

"Because, in the first place, the idea is not mine; and, secondly, because I have decided never to let my name be associated with any other name."[1]

"Then we will withhold our names."

"No, indeed! that is out of the question."

[1] I resolutely stuck to this decision until the time when my great friendship with Maquet determined me to spring the surprise upon him of putting forth his name with mine as the author of the drama of *Les Mousquetaires*. This was but fair, however, since we did not only the drama, but also the romance, in collaboration. I am delighted to be able to add, that, although we have not worked together now for a couple of years, the friendship is just the same, at all events on my side.

"Very well, as you will! We will settle the point when we have come to it. . . . You will take half share?"

"Why half, when there are three of us?"

"Because we are leaving you the trouble of working out the plot."

"I will compose the play if you wish; but I will only take a third of the profits."

"We will discuss all that in Paris."

"Precisely so! But do not forget that I make my reservations."

"Then, this 24 July, at five o'clock in the afternoon, it is agreed that you, Goubaux and I shall write *Richard Darlington* between us."

"To-day, 24 July, my birthday, it is agreed, at five o'clock in the afternoon, that Goubaux, you and I shall write *Richard Darlington*."

"Is to-day your birthday?"

"I was twenty-nine at four o'clock this morning."

"Bravo! that will bring us good luck!"

"I hope so!"

"When shall you be in Paris?"

"About 15 August."

"That will suit perfectly!"

"Now, jot down the plan of the prologue for me on a slip of paper."

"Why now?"

"Because I shall come to the rendezvous with the prologue completed. . . . The more there is done the less will there be to do."

"Capital! you shall have the outline to-morrow."

"Oh! it will do if I have it just before I leave; if I have it to-morrow, I shall finish it the day after to-morrow, and that will cause trouble in the matter of the drama I am writing."

"Very well; I will keep it ready for you."

"Ah! one more favour."

"Which is?"

"Do not let us speak of *Richard Darlington* again; I shall

think of it quite enough, you need not fear, without talking about it."

"We will not mention it again."

And, as a matter of fact, from that moment, there was no reference made between us to *Richard Darlington*—I will not say as though it had never existed, but as though it never were to exist. On the other hand, *Charles VII.* went on its way. On 10 August I wrote the four last lines.

> "Vous qui, nés sur la terre,
> Portez comme des chiens, la chaine héréditaire,
> Demeurez en hurlant près du sépulcre ou vert . . .
> Pour Yakoub, il est libre, et retourne au désert!"

When the work was finished, I read it over. It was, as I have said, more in the nature of a *pastiche* than a true drama; but there was an immense advance in style between *Christine* and *Charles VII.* True, *Christine* is far superior to *Charles VII.* in imagination and in dramatic feeling.

Nothing further kept me at Trouville. Beudin had preceded me to Paris several days before. We took leave of M. and Madame de la Garenne; we settled our accounts with Madame Oseraie and we started for Paris. Bonnechose accompanied us as far as Honfleur. He did not know how to part with us, poor fellow! He might have guessed that we were never to see each other again. The same night we took diligence from Rouen. Next day, at dawn, the travellers got down to climb a hillside; I thought I recognised, among our fellow-passengers, one of the editors of the *Journal des Débats.* I went up to him as he was coming towards me, and we got into conversation.

"Well!" he said, "you have heard?"

"What?"

"*Marion Delorme* has been performed."

"Ah really? . . . And here am I hurrying to be present at the first performance!"

"You will not see it . . . and you will not have lost much."

It was a matter of course that the editor of a journal

so devoted an admirer of Hugo as was the *Journal des Débats* should speak thus of the great poet.

"Why do I not miss much? Has the play not succeeded?"

"Oh! yes indeed! but coldly, coldly, coldly; and no money in it."

My companion said this with the intense gratification of the critic taking his revenge upon the author, of the eunuch with his foot on the sultan's neck.

"Cold? No money?" I repeated.

"And besides, badly played!"

"Badly played by Bocage and Dorval! Come now!"

"If the author had had any common-sense he would have withdrawn the play or he would have had it performed after the July Revolution, while things were warm after the rejection of MM. de Polignac and de la Bourdonnaie."

"But as to poetry? . . ."

"Weak! Much poorer than *Hernani*!"

"Ah! say you so," I burst forth, "a drama weak in poetry that contains such lines as these!"—

"Le Roi.

Je sais l'affaire, assez q'avez vous a me dire?

Le Marquis de Nangis.

Je dis qu'il est bien temps que vous y songiez, sire:
Que le cardinal-duc a de sombres projets,
Et qu'il boit le meilleur du sang de vos sujets.
Votre père Henri, de mémoire royale,
N'eut point ainsi livré sa noblesse loyale;
Il ne la frappait point sans y fort regarder,
Et, bien gardé par elle, il savait la garder;
Il savait qu'on peut faire, avec des gens d'épees,
Quelque chose de mieux que des têtes coupées;
Qu'ils sont bons à la guerre! Il ne l'ignorait point,
Lui, dont plus d'une balle a troué le pourpoint.
Ce temps était le bon; j'en fus, et je l'honore;
Un peu de seigneurie y palpitait encore.

Jamais à des seigneurs un prêtre n'eût touché ;
On n'avait point alors de tête à bon marché.
Sire, en des jours mauvais comme ceux où nous sommes,
Croyez un vieux ; gardez un peu de gentilshommes.
Vous en aurez besoin peut-être à votre tour !
Hélas ! vous gémirez peut-être, quelque jour !
Que la place de Grève ait été si fêtée,
Et que tant de seigneurs, de valeur indomptée ;
Vers qui se tourneront vos regrets envieux,
Soient morts depuis longtemps, qui ne seraient pas vieux !

Car nous sommes tout chauds de la guerre civile,
Et le tocsin d'hier gronde encor dans la ville
Soyez plus ménager des peines du bourreau :
C'est lui qui doit garder son estoc au fourreau,
Non pas nous ! D'échafauds montrez vous économe ;
Craignez d'avoir, un jour, à pleurer tel brave homme,
Tel vaillant de grand cœur dont, à l'heure qu'il est,
Le squelette blanchit aux chaînes d'un gibet !
Sire, le sang n'est pas un bonne rosée ;
Nulle moisson ne vient sur la grève arrosée ;
Et le peuple des rois évite le balcon,
Quand, aux dépens du Louvre, ils peuplent Montfaucon.
Meurent les courtisans, s'il faut que leur voix aille
Vous amuser, pendant que le bourreau travaille !
Cette voix des flatteurs qui dit que tout est bon,
Qu'après tout, on est fils d'Henri Quatre, et Bourbon,
Si haute qu'elle soit, ne couvre pas sans peine
Le bruit sourd qu'èn tombant fait une tête humaine.
Je vous en donne avis, ne jouez pas ce jeu,
Roi, qui serez, un jour, face a face avec Dieu.
Donc, je vous dis, avant que rien ne s'accomplisse,
Qu'à tout prendre, il vaut mieux un combat qu'un supplice,
Que ce n'est pas la joie et l'honneur des États
De voir plus de besogneaux bourreaux qu'aux soldats !
Que ce n'est un pasteur dur pour la France où vous êtes,
Qu'un prêtre qui se paye une dîme de têtes,
Et que cet homme, illustre entre les inhumains,
Qui touche à votre sceptre, a du sang à ses mains ! "

"Why ! you know it by heart then ?"
"I hope so, indeed !"
"Why the deuce did you learn it ?"
"I know nearly the whole of *Marion Delorme* by heart."

And I quoted almost the whole of the scene between Didier and Marion Delorme, in the island.

"Ah! that is indeed odd!" he said.

"No! there is nothing odd about it. I simply think *Marion Delorme* one of the most beautiful things in the world. I had the manuscript at my disposal and have read and re-read it. The lines I have just recited have remained in my memory and I repeated them to you in support of my opinion."

"Then, too," continued my critic, "the plot is taken from de Vigny's novel. . . ."

"Good! that is exactly where Hugo shows his wisdom. I would willingly have been his John the forerunner in this instance."

"Do you mean to say that Saverny and Didier are not copied from Cinq-Mars and de Thou?"

"As man is copied from man and no further!"

"And Didier is your Antony."

"Rather say that Antony is taken from Didier, seeing that *Marion Delorme* was made a year before I dreamt of *Antony*."

"Ah! well, one good thing has come out of it."

"What is that?"

"Your defence of Victor Hugo."

"Why not? I like him and admire him."

"A colleague!" said the critic in a tone of profound pity, and shrugging his shoulders.

"Take your seats, gentlemen!" shouted the conductor.

We remounted, the editor of the *Journal des Débats* inside, I in the coupé, and the diligence resumed a monotonous trot, favourable to meditation.

CHAPTER XVI

Marion Delorme

I FELL into meditation. What was the reason the public was not of my way of thinking about *Marion Delorme*? I had remarked to Taylor on the night of the reading at Devéria's—

"If Hugo makes as much dramatic progress as is usual in ordinary dramatic development, we shall all be done for!"

The first act of *Marion*, in style and argument, is one of the cleverest and most fascinating ever seen on the stage. All the characters take part in it: Marion, Didier and Saverny. The last six lines forecast the whole play, even including the conversion of the courtesan. Marion remains in a reverie for a while, then she calls out—

"MARION.

Dame Rose
(*Montrant la fenêtre.*)
Fermez . . .

DAME ROSE, *à part.*

On dirait qu'elle pleure!
(*Haut.*)
Il est temps de dormir, madame.

MARION.

Oui, c'est votre heure,
A vous autres . . .
(*Défaisant ses cheveux.*)
Venez m'accommoder.

DAME ROSE (*la désabillant*).

Eh bien,
Madame, le monsieur de ce soir est-il bien? . . .
Riche? . . .

MARION.

Non.

DAME ROSE.

Galant?

MARION.

Non, Rose: il ne m'a pas même
Baisé la main!

DAME ROSE.

Alors, qu'en faites-vous?

MARION, *pensive.*

Je l'aime! . . ."

The second act scintillates with wit and poetry. The very original character of Langely, which is unfolded in the fourth act, is inserted as neatly as possible.

As regards poetry I know none in any other language constructed like this—

"Monsieur vient de Paris? Dit-on quelques nouvelles?
—Point! Corneille toujours met en l'air les cervelles;
Guiche a l'Ordre, Ast est duc. Puis des riens à foisson:
De trente huguenots on a fait pendaison.
Toujours nombre de duels. Le trois, c'était Angennes
Contre Arquien, pout avoir porté du point de Gênes.
Lavardin avec Pons s'est rencontré le dix,
Pour avoir pris a Pons la femme de Sourdis;
Sourdis avec d'Ailly, pour une du théâtre
De Mondori; le neuf, Nogent avec la Châtre,
Pour avoir mal écrit trois vers a Colletet;
Gorde avec Margaillan, pour l'heure qu'il était;
D'Humière avec Gondi, pour le pas à l'église;
Et puis tous les Brissac contre tous les Soubise,
A propos du pari d'un cheval contre un chien;
Enfin, Caussade avec la Tournelle, pour rien,
Poir le plaisir! Caussade a tué la Tournelle.
. . . . . .
— Refais nous donc la liste
De tous ces duels . . . Qu'en dit le roi?

— Le cardinal
Est furieux, et veux un prompt remède au mal !
—Point de courrier du camp ?
— Je crois que, par surprise,
Nous avons pris Figuière . . . ou bien qu'on nous l'à prise . . .
C'est a nous qu'on l'a prise !
— Et que dit de ce coup
Le roi ?
— Le cardinal n'est pas content du tout !
— Que fait la cour ? le roi se porte bien, sans doute ?
— Non pas : le cardinal a la fièvre et la goutte,
Et ne va qu'en litière.
— Étrange original !
Quand nous te parlons roi, tu réponds cardinal !
—Ah ! c'est la mode ! "

In order to understand the value of the second act, we must quote line after line. The whole play, in fact, has but one defect: its dazzling poetry blinds the actors; players of the first order are necessary for the acting of the very smallest parts. There is a M. de Bouchavannes who says four lines, I think; the first two upon Corneille—

"Famille de robins, de petits avocats,
Qui se sont fait des sous en rognant des ducats ! "

And the other two upon Richelieu—

"Meure le Richelieu, qui déchire et qui flatte !
L'homme a la main sanglante, à la robe écarlate ! "

If you can get those four lines said properly by a supernumerary you will indeed be a great teacher ! Or if you can get them said by an artiste, you will indeed be a clever manager ! Then all the discussion upon Corneille and Garnier, which I imitated in *Christine*, is excellently appropriate. It had, in fact, come to open fighting from the moment they accused us of offending against good taste the theme supported by M. Étienne, M. Viennet and M. Onésime Leroy, and of placing before the public the opinion held about Corneille, when Cardinal Richelieu influenced the Academy to censure the *Cid* in the same way that we in our turn had

censured it! When I say *the same way*, I mean the same as regards sequence of time and not of affiliation: Academicians do not reproduce; as is well-known, it is only with difficulty that they even manage to produce. In conclusion, the second act is admirably summed up in this line of Langely—

"Ca! qui dirait qu'ici c'est moi qui suis le fou?"

Then comes the third act, full of imagination, in which Laffemas, Richelieu's black servant, affords contrast to the grey figure of His Eminence; where Didier and Marion come to ask hospitality from the Marquis de Nangis, lost in the midst of a troop of mountebanks; when Didier learns from Saverny that Marie and Marion are one and the same woman, and where, his heart broken by one of the greatest sorrows that can wring man's soul, he gives himself up to the guilty lieutenant.

The fourth act is a masterpiece. It has been objected that this act no more belongs to the play than a drawer does to a chest of drawers; granted! But in that drawer the author has enclosed the very gem of the whole play: the character of Louis XIII., the wearied, melancholy, ill, weak, cruel and superstitious king, who has nobody but a clown to distract his thoughts, and who only talks with him of scaffolds and of beheadings and of tombs, not daring to complain to anyone else of the state of dependence in which the terrible Cardinal holds him.

Listen to this—

"LANGELY.—Votre Majesté donc souffre bien?
LE ROI.—Je m'enniue!
Moi, le premier de France, en être le dernier!
Je changerais mon sort au sort d'un braconnier.
Oh! chasser tout le jour en vos allures franches;
N'avoir rien qui vous gêne, et dormir sous les branches;
Rire des gens du roi, chanter pendant l'éclair,
Et vivre libre au bois, comme l'oiseau dans l'air!
Le manant est, du moins, maître et roi dans son bouge.
Mais toujours sous les yeux avoir cet homme rouge;
Toujours là, grave et dur, me disant à toisir:
'Sire, il faut que ceci soit votre bon plaisir.'

Dérision ! cet homme au peuple me dérobe ;
Comme on fait d'un enfant, il me met dans sa robe ;
Et, lorsqu'un passant dit : 'Qu'est-ce donc que je voi
Dessous le cardinal ?' on répond : 'C'est le roi !'
Puis ce sont, tous les jours, quelques nouvelles listes :
Hier, des huguenots, aujourd'hui, des duellistes,
Dont il lui faut la tête . . . Un duel ! le grand forfait !
Mais des têtes, toujours ! qu'est-ce donc qu'il en fait ? . . ."

In a moment of spite you hear him say to Langely—

"Crois-tu, si je voulais, que je serais le maître ?"

And Langely, ever faithful, replies by this line, which has passed into a proverb—

"Montaigne dit : 'Que sais-je ?' Et Rabelais : 'Peut-être !'"

At last he breaks his chain for a second, picks up a pen ; and when on the point of signing a pardon for Didier and Saverny, to his jester, who says to him—

"Toute grâce est un poids qu'un roi du cœur s'enlève !"

he replies—

"Tu dis vrai : j'ai toujours souffert, les jours de Grève !
Nangis avait raison, un mort jamais ne sert,
Et Montfaucon peuplé rend le Louvre désert.
C'est une trahison que de venir, en face,
Au fils du roi Henri nier son droit de grâce !
Que fais-je ainsi, déchu, détrôné, désarmé,
Comme dans un sépulcre en cet homme enfermé ?
Sa robe est mon linceul, et mes peuples me pleurent . . .
Non ! non ! je ne veux pas que ces deux enfants meurent !
Vivre est un don du ciel trop visible et trop beau !
Dieu, qui sait où l'on va, peut ouvrir un tombeau ;
Un roi, non . . . Je les rends tous deux à leur famille ;
Ils vivront . . . Ce vieillard et cette jeune fille
Me béniront ! C'est dit.
(*Il signe.*)
J'ai signé, moi, le roi !
Le cardinal sera furieux ; mais, ma foi !
Tant pis ! cela fera plaisir à Bellegarde."

And Langely says half aloud—

"On peut bien, une fois, être roi, par mégarde!"

What a masterpiece is that act! And then one remembers that because M. Crosnier was closely pressed, and had to change his spectacle, he suppressed that act, which, in the words of the critic, *faisait longueur*! . . .

Ah well! . . .

In the fifth act the pardon is revoked. The young people must die. They are led out into the courtyard of the prison for a few minutes' fresh air. Didier converses with the spectre of death visible only to himself; Saverny sleeps his last sleep. By prostituting herself to Laffemas, Marion has secured from the judge the life of her lover, and as she enters, bruised still from the judge's mauling, she says—

"Sa lèvre est un fer rouge, et m'a toute marquée!"

Suppose Mademoiselle Mars, who did not want to say—

"Vous êtes, mon lion, superbe et généreux!"

had had such a line as that to say, think what a struggle there would have been between her and the author. But Dorval found it easy enough, and she said the line with admirable expression.

As for Bocage, the hatred, pride and scorn which he displayed were truely superb, when, not able to contain himself longer, he lets the secret escape, which until then had been gnawing his entrails as the fox the young Spartan's, he exclaimed—

"Marie . . . ou Marion?
— Didier, soyez clément!

— Madame, on n'entre pas ici facilement;

Les bastilles d'État sont nuit et jour gardées;
Les portes sont de fer, les murs ont vingt coudées!
Pour que devant vos pas la porte s'ouvre ainsi,
A qui vous êtes-vous prostituée ici?
—Didier, qui vous a dit?

— Personne . . . Je devine !
— Didier, j'en jure ici par la bonté divine,
C'était pour vous sauver, vous arracher d'ici,
Pour fléchir les bourreaux, pour vous sauver . . .
— Merci !
Ah ! qu'on soit jusque-là sans pudeur et sans âme,
C'est véritablement une honte, madame !
Où donc est le marchand d'opprobre et de mépris
Qui se fait acheter ma tête à de tels prix ?
Où donc est le geôlier, le juge ? où donc est l'homme ?
Que je le broie ici ! qui je l'écrase . . . comme
Ceci !
(*Il brise le portrait de Marion.*)
Le juge ! Allez, messieurs, faites des lois,
Et jugez ! Que m'importe, à moi, que le faux poids
Qui fait toujours pencher votre balance infâme
Soit la tête d'un homme ou l'honneur d'une femme ! "

I challenge anyone to find a more powerful or affecting passage in any language that has been written since the day when the lips of man uttered a first cry, a first complaint. Finally, Didier forgives Marion for being Marion, and, for a moment, the redeemed courtesan again becomes the lover. It is then that she speaks these two charming lines, which were suppressed at the performance and even, I believe, in the printed play—

"De l'autre Marion rien en moi n'est resté,
Ton amour m'a refait une virginité ! "

Then the executioner enters, the two young people walk to the scaffold, the wall falls, Richelieu passes through the breach in his litter, and Marion Delorme, laid on the ground, half-fainting, recognises Didier's executioner, rises, exclaiming with a gesture of menace and of despair—

"Regardez tous ! voici l'homme rouge qui passe ! "

It is twenty-two years ago since I meditated thus in the coupé of my diligence, going over in memory the whole play of *Marion Delorme*. After twenty-two years I have just re-

read it in order to write this chapter; my appreciation of it has not changed; if anything, I think the drama even more beautiful now than I did then. Now, what was the reason that it was less successful than *Hernani* or than *Lucrèce Borgia*? This is one of those mysteries which neither the sibyl of Cumæ nor the pythoness of Delphi will ever explain,—nor *the soul of the earth*, which speaks to M. Hennequin. Well, I say it boldly, there is one thing of which I am as happy now as I was then: in reading that beautiful drama again, for each act of which I would give a year of my life, were it possible, I have felt a greater admiration for my dear Victor, a more fervent friendship towards him and not one atom of envy. Only, I repeat at my desk in Brussels what I said in the Rouen diligence: "Ah! if only I could write such lines as these since I know so well how to construct a play! . . ." I reached Paris without having thought of anything else but *Marion Delorme*. I had completely forgotten *Charles VII.* I went to pay my greetings to Bocage and Dorval the very evening of my arrival. They promised to act for me, and I took my place in the theatre. Exactly what I expected had happened to spoil the play; except for Bocage, who played Didier; Dorval, Marion; and Chéri, Saverny; the rest of the play was ruined. The result of course was that all the marvellous poetry was extinguished, as a breath extinguishes the clearness of a mirror. I left the theatre with a heavy heart.

CHAPTER XVII

Collaboration

I HAD to let a few days go by before I had the courage to return to my own verses after having heard and re-read those of Hugo. I felt inclined to do to *Charles VII.* what Harel had asked me to do to *Christine*: to put it into prose. Finally, I gathered together some friends at my house, and read them my new drama. But, whether I read badly or whether they came to me with biased minds, the reading did not have the effect upon them that I expected. This want of success discouraged me. Two days later, I had to read to Harel, who had already sent me my premium of a thousand francs, and also to Georges, to whom the part of Bérengère was allotted. I wrote to Harel not to count on the play and I sent him back his thousand francs. I decided not to have my drama played. Harel believed neither in my abnegation nor in my honesty. He came rushing to me in alarm. I laid my reasons before him, taking as many pains to depreciate my work as another would have done to exalt his. But to everything I said Harel took exception, repeating—

"It is not that . . . it is not that . . . it is not that!"

"What, then, is it?" I exclaimed.

"The Théâtre-Français had offered you five thousand francs premium!"

"Me?"

"I know it."

"Me, five thousand francs premium?"

"I tell you I know it, and in proof . . ." He drew five one-thousand franc notes from his pocket.

"The proof lies here in the five thousand francs I bring you." And he held out the five notes to me.

I took one of them.

"All right," I said, "there is nothing to change in the programme; I will read it the day after to-morrow. Only, tell Lockroy to be at the reading."

"Well, what about the remaining four thousand francs?"

"They do not belong to me, my dear fellow; therefore you must take them back."

Harel scratched his ear and looked at me sideways. It was evident he did not understand.

Poor Harel! how sharp he was!

Two days later, before Harel, Georges, Janin and Lockroy I read the play with immense success. It was at once put in rehearsal and was to appear soon after a drama of *Mirabeau*, which was being studied. I would fain say what the drama of *Mirabeau* was like, but I cannot now remember. All I know is that the principal part was for Frédérick, and that they thought a great deal of the work.

Charles VII. was distributed as follows:—Savoisy, Ligier; Bérengère, Georges; Yaqoub, Lockroy; Charles VII., Delafosse: Agnès Sorel, Noblet. This business of the distribution done, I immediately turned to *Richard*; its wholly modern colouring, political theme, vivid and rather coarse treatment was more in accord with my own age and special tastes than studies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Let me hasten to say that I was then not anything like as familiar with those periods as I am now.

I wrote to Goubaux that I was at his disposition if it pleased him to come, either next day to breakfast at my house, or at his own if he preferred. We had become neighbours; I had left my lodgings in the rue de l'Université and had taken a third floor in the square d'Orléans, a very fine house just built in the rue Saint-Lazare, 42, where several of my friends already lived, Zimmermann, Étienne Arago, Robert Fleury and Gué. I believe Zimmermann and Robert Fleury still live there: Gué is dead and Étienne Arago is in exile.

Goubaux, who lived at No. 19 rue Blanche, fixed a rendezvous there for six in the evening. We were to dine first and talk of *Richard Darlington* afterwards. I say *talk*, because, at the time of reading, it was found that hardly anything had been written. However, Goubaux had found several guide-posts to serve as beacons for our three acts. There were, pre-eminently, traits of character to suit ambitious actors. One of the principal was where Dr. Grey recalls to Richard and Mawbray, when Richard is about to marry Jenny, the circumstances of the famous night which formed the subject of the prologue, relating how a carriage stopped at the door. "Had that carriage a *coat of arms*?" asked Richard. Another item, still more remarkable, was given me to make what I liked of it: the daughter of Da Sylva, Caroline, Richard's mother, has married a Lord Wilmor; it is his daughter who is to marry Richard, led away by the king determined to divorce Jenny. Only, Caroline, who sees no more in Richard than an influential Member of Parliament, one day destined to become a minister, demands an interview with Richard to reveal a great secret to him; the secret is the existence of a boy who was lost in the little village of Darlington, and who, being her son, has the right to her fortune. Richard listens with growing attention; then, at one particular passage, Wilmor's recital coincides so remarkably with that of Mawbray as to leave no room for doubt in his mind; but, instead of revealing himself, instead of flinging himself into the arms of the woman who confesses her shame and weeps, asking for her child back again, he gently disengages himself from her in order to say to himself in a whisper, "She is my mother!" and to ask himself, still in a whisper, "Who can my father be?" Finally, Richard accepts the king's proposals; he must get rid of his wife, no matter at what price, even were it that of a crime. This is about as far as the work had progressed at our first talk with Goubaux. I kept my word and brought the prologue entirely finished. I had done it exactly as Goubaux had imagined it should be written; I had, therefore, but to take courage and to continue. While Goubaux talked, my mind was gathering up

all the threads he held, and, like an active weaver, in less than an hour, I had almost entirely sketched out the plan on my canvas. I shared my mental travail with him, all unformed as it was. The divorce scene between Richard and his wife, in especial, delighted me immensely. A scene of Schiller had returned to my memory, a scene of marvellous beauty and vigour. I saw how I could apply the scene between Philip II. and Elizabeth, to Richard and Jenny. I will give the two scenes in due course. All this preparatory work was settled between us;—in addition to this, it was decided that Goubaux and Beudin should write the election scene together, for which I had not the necessary data, while Beudin had been present at scenes of this nature in London. Then Goubaux looked at me.

"Only one thing troubles me now," he said.

"Only one?"

"Yes; I see all the rest of the play, which cannot fail to turn out all right in your hands."

"Then what is the thing that troubles you?"

"The *dénoûment*."

"Why the *dénoûment*? We have got that already. Mawbray comes forward as witness and says to Richard, who is about to sign: 'You are my son, and I am the executioner!' Richard falls to the ground and a fit of apoplexy sends him to the devil, which is the right place for him."

"No, that is not it at all," said Goubaux, shaking his head.

"What is it then?"

"It is the way in which he gets rid of his wife."

"Ah!" I said. "And you have no idea how that is to be done?"

"I had indeed some idea of making him put poison in her tea."

It was now my turn to shake my head.

"The death of Jenny must be caused by something in the situation, an act of frenzy, not by premeditation."

"Oh, yes! I am well aware of that . . . but think of a

dagger thrust . . . Richard is not an Antony, he does not carry daggers about in his coat pockets!"

"Then," said I, "he shall not stab her."

"But if he does not poison her or stab her what shall he do?"

"Chuck her out of the window!"

"What?"

I repeated my phrase.

"I must have misunderstood you," said Goubaux.

"No."

"But, my dear friend, you must be out of your mind."

"Leave it to me."

"But it is impossible!"

"I see the scene . . . just when Richard thinks Jenny has been carried off by Tompson, he finds her hidden in the cupboard of the very room where they are going to sign the contract; at the same moment he hears the steps of Da Sylva and his daughter on the staircase. In order not to be surprised with Jenny, there is but one way out of the difficulty—to throw her out of the window. So he throws her out of the window."

"I must confess you frighten me with your methods of procedure! In the second act, he breaks Jenny's head against the furniture; in the third act he flings her out of the window. . . . Oh! come, come!"

"Listen, let me finish the thing as I like—then, if it is absurd, we will alter it."

"Will you listen to reason?"

"I? Set your mind at rest; when I am convinced, I will, if necessary, reconstruct the whole play from beginning to end."

"When will the first act be ready?"

"What day of the week is this?"

"Monday."

"Come and dine with me on Thursday: it will be done."

"But your rehearsals at the Odéon?"

"Bah! The parts are being collated to-day; for a fortnight they will read round a table or rehearse with the parts in their hands. By the end of the fortnight Richard will be finished."

"*Amen*!"

"Adieu."

"Are you going already?"

"I must get to work."

"At what?"

"Why at *Richard*, of course! Do you think I have too much time? Our first act is not an easy one to begin."

"Don't forget the part of Tompson!"

"You needn't be anxious, I have it . . . When we come to the scene where Mawbray kills him we will give him a Shakespearian death!"

"Mawbray kills him then?"

"Yes . . . Did I not tell you that?"

"No."

"The deuce! does it displease you, then, that Mawbray kills Tompson?"

"I? Not the slightest."

"You will leave it to me? Tompson?"

"Certainly."

"Then he is a dead man. Adieu."

I ran off and got into bed. At that time I still maintained the habit of writing my dramas in bed. Whilst I wrote the first scene of the first act, Goubaux and Beudin did the election scene, a lively, animated scene, full of character. When Goubaux came to dine with me, on the following Thursday, everything was ready and the two scenes could be fitted together. I then began on the second act, that is to say, upon the vital part of the drama. Richard's talent has caused him to reach the front rank of the Opposition, and he refuses all offers made him by the ministers; but he is cleverly brought in contact with an unknown benefactor, who makes him such offers and promises that Richard sells his conscience to become the son-in-law of Lord Wilmor and to be a minister. It is in the second scene of that act that the divorce incident takes place between Richard and Jenny, which was imitated from Schiller. On the Tuesday following we had a fresh meeting. All went swimmingly, except the scene between the king and

Richard. I had completely failed in this, and so Goubaux undertook to remould it, and he made it what it is, that is to say, one of the best and cleverest in the work. Here is the scene imitated from Schiller—

"ACTE IV.—Scene ix.

Le Roi.—Je ne me connais plus moi-même ! je ne respecte plus aucune voix, aucune loi de la nature, aucun droit des nations !

La Reine.—Combien je plains Votre Majesté !

Le Roi.—Me plaindre ? La pitié d'une impudique !

L'infante, *se jetant tout effrayée dans les bras de sa mere.*—Le roi est en colère, et ma mère chérie pleure ! (*Le roi arrache l'infante des bras de sa mere.*)

La Reine, *avec douceur et dignité mais d'une voix tremblante.*—Je dois pourtant garantir cette enfant des mauvais traitements ! . . . Viens avec moi, ma fille ! (*Elle la prend dans ses bras.*) Si le roi ne veut pas te reconnaître, je ferai venir de l'autre côté des Pyrénées des protecteurs pour défendre notre cause !

(*Elle veut sortir.*)

Le Roi, *trouble.*—Madame !

La Reine.—Je ne puis plus supporter . . . C'en est trop ! (*Elle s'avance vers la porte, mais s'évanouit et tombe avec l'infante.*)

Le Roi, *courant a elle avec effroi.*—Dieu ! qu'est-ce donc ?

L'infante, *avec des cris de frayeur.*—Hélas ! ma mère saigne ! (*Elle s'enfuit en pleurant.*)

Le Roi, *avec anxiété.*—Quel terrible accident ! Du sang ! . . . Ai-je mérité que vous me punissiez si cruellement ? . . . Levez-vous ! remettez-vous ! . . . On vient . . . levez-vous . . . On vous surprendra . . . levez-vous ! . . . Faut-il que toute ma cour se repaisse de ce spectacle ? Faut-il donc vous prier de vous lever ? . . ."

Now to *Richard.* Richard wants to force Jenny to sign the act of divorce and she refuses.

"Jenny.—Mais que voulez-vous donc, alors ? Expliquez-vous clairement ; car tantôt je comprends trop, et tantôt pas assez.

Richard.—Pour vous et pour moi, mieux vaut un consentement mutuel.

Jenny.—Vous m'avez donc crue bien lâche ? Que, moi, j'aille devant un juge, sans y être traînée par les cheveux, déclarer de ma voix, signer de ma main que je ne suis pas digne d'être l'épouse de sir Richard ? Vous ne me connaissez donc pas, vous qui croyez que je ne suis bonne qu'aux soins d'un ménage dédaigné ; que me croyez anéantie par l'absence ;

qui pensez que je ploierai parce que vous appuierez le poing sur ma tête ; Dans le temps de mon bonheur, oui, cela aurait pu être ; mais mes larmes ont retrempé mon cœur ; mes nuits d'insomnie ont affermi mon courage ? le malheur enfin m'a fait une volonté ! Ce que je suis, je vous le dois, Richard ; c'est votre faute ; ne vous en prenez donc qu'a vous . . . Maintenant, voyons ! à qui aura le plus de courage, du faible ou du fort. Sir Richard, je ne veux pas !

RICHARD.—Madame, jusqu'ici, je n'ai fait entendre que des paroles de conciliation.

JENNY.—Essayez d'avoir recours à d'autres !

RICHARD, *marchant à elle.*—Jenny !

JENNY, *froidement.*—Richard !

RICHARD.—Malheureuse ! savez-vous ce dont je suis capable ?

JENNY.—Je le devine.

RICHARD.—Et vous ne tremblez pas ?

JENNY.—Voyez.

RICHARD, *lui prenant les mains.*—Femme !

JENNY, *tombant à genoux de la secousse.*—Ah ! . . .

RICHARD.—A genoux !

JENNY, *les mains au ciel.*—Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de lui ! (*Elle se relève.*)

RICHARD.—Ah ! c'est de vous qu'il a pitié, car je m'en vais . . . Adieu, Jenny ; demandez au ciel que ce soit pour toujours !

JENNY, *courant à lui, et lui jetant les bras autour du cou.*—Richard ! Richard ! ne t'en va pas !

RICHARD.—Laissez-moi partir.

JENNY.—Si tu savais comme je t'aime !

RICHARD.—Prouvez-le-moi.

JENNY.—Ma mère ! ma mère !

RICHARD.—Voulez-vous ?

JENNY.—Tu me l'avais bien dit !

RICHARD.—Un dernier mot.

JENNY.—Ne le dis pas.

RICHARD.—Consens-tu ?

JENNY.—Écoute-moi.

RICHARD.—Consens-tu ? (*Jenny se tait.*) C'est bien. Mais plus de messages, plus de lettres. . . Que rien ne vous rappelle à moi, que je ne sache même pas que vous existez ! Je vous laisse une jeunesse sans époux, une vieillesse sans enfant.

JENNY.—Pas d'imprécations ! pas d'imprécations !

RICHARD.—Adieu !

JENNY.—Vous ne partirez pas !

RICHARD.—Damnation !

JENNY.—Vous me tuerez plutôt !

RICHARD.—Ah ! laissez-moi ! (*Jenny, repoussée, va tomber la tête sur l'angle d'un meuble.*)

JENNY.—Ah ! . . . (*Elle se relève tout ensanglantée.*) Ah ! Richard ! . . . (*Elle chancelle en etendant les bras de son côté, et retombe.*) Il faut que je vous aime bien ! (*Elles Évanouit.*)

RICHARD.—Evanouie ! . . . blessée ! . . . du sang ! . . . Malédiction ! . . . Jenny ! . . . Jenny ! (*Il la porte sur un fauteuil.*) Et ce sang qui ne s'arrête pas. . . (*Il l'étanche avec son mouchoir.*) Je ne peux cependant pas rester éternellement ici. (*Il se rapproche d'elle.*) Jenny, finissons. . . Je me retire. . . Tu ne veux pas répondre ? . . . Adieu donc ! . . ."

There remained the last act; it was composed of three scenes: the first takes place in Richard's house in London, the second in a forest, the third in Jenny's chamber. My reader knows the engagement I had undertaken, to have Jenny thrown out of the window. Very well, I boldly prepared myself to keep it, and I wrote the scene in my bed, as usual. This is the situation: Mawbray has killed Tompson, who carried Jenny off, and has brought her into the room where in the second act the scene between her and her husband took place. This room has only two doors: one leading to the stairs, the other into a cupboard, and one window, the view from which looks deep down into a precipice. Scarcely is Jenny left alone with her terror,—for she has no doubt that it is her husband who has had her carried off,—than she hears and recognises Richard's step. Not able to flee she takes refuge in the cabinet. Richard enters.

" RICHARD.—J'arrive à temps ! A peine si je dois avoir, sur le marquis et sa famille, une demi-heure d'avance.—James, apportez des flambeaux, et tenez-vous à la porte pour conduire ici les personnes qui arriveront dans un instant. . . Bien. . . Allez ! (*Tirant sa montre.*) Huit heures ! Tompson doit être maintenant à Douvres, et, demain matin, il sera à Calais. Dieu le conduise ! . . . Voyons si rien n'indique que cet appartement a été habité par une femme. (*Apercevant le chapeau et le châle que Jenny vient de déposer sur une chaise.*) La précaution n'était pas inutile. . . Que faire de cela ? Je n'ai pas la clef des armoires. . . Les jeter par la fenêtre : on les retrouvera demain. . . Ah ! des lumières sur le haut de la montagne . . . C'est sans doute le marquis ; il est exact. . . Mais où diable mettre ces chiffons ? Ah ! ce cabinet. . . j'en retirerai la clef. (*Il ouvre le cabinet.*)

JENNY.—Ah !

RICHARD, *la saisissant par le bras.*—Qui est la?

JENNY.—Moi, moi, Richard. . . Ne me faites point de mal!

RICHARD, *l'attirant sur le théâtre.*—Jenny! mais c'est donc un démon qui me la jette à la face toutes les fois que je crois être débarrassé d'elle? . . . Que faites-vous ici? qui vous y ramène? Parlez vite. . .

JENNY.—Mawbray!

RICHARD.—Mawbray! toujours Mawbray! Où est-il, que je ma venge enfin sur un homme?

JENNY.—Il est loin. . . bien loin. . . reparti pour Londres. . . Grâce pour lui!

RICHARD.—Eh bien?

JENNY.—Il a arrêté la voiture.

RICHARD.—Après? . . . Ne voyez-vous pas que je brûle?

JENNY.—Et moi, que je. . .

RICHARD.—Après? vous dis-je?

JENNY.—Ils se sont battus.

RICHARD.—Et? . . .

JENNY.—Et Mawbray a tué Tompson.

RICHARD.—Enfer! . . . Alors, il vous a ramenée ici?

JENNY.—Oui. . . oui. . pardon!

RICHARD.—Jenny, écoutez!

JENNY.—C'est le roulement d'une voiture.

RICHARD.—Cette voiture. . .

JENNY.—Eh bien?

RICHARD.—Elle amène ma femme et sa famille.

JENNY.—Votre femme et sa famille! . . . Et moi, moi, que suis-je donc?

RICHARD.—Vous, Jenny? vous? . . . Vous êtes mon mauvais génie! vous êtes l'abîme où vont s'engloutir toutes mes espérances! vous êtes le démon qui me pousse à l'échafaud, car je ferai un crime!

JENNY.—Oh! mon Dieu!

RICHARD.—C'est qu'il n'y à plus a reculer, voyez-vous! vous n'avez pas voulu signer le divorce, vous n'avez pas voulu quitter l'Angleterre. . .

JENNY.—Oh! maintenant, maintenant, je veux tout ce que vous voudrez.

RICHARD.—Eh! maintenant, il est trop tard!

JENNY.—Qu'allez-vous donc faire alors?

RICHARD.—Je ne sais. . . mais priez Dieu!

JENNY.—Richard!

RICHARD, *lui mettant la main sur la bouche.*—Silence! ne les entendez-vous pas? ne les entendez-vous pas? Ils montent! . . . ils montent! . . . ils vont trouver une femme ici!"

Here I stopped short. I had gone as far as I could go. But there was the question of keeping my promise to Goubaux.

I leapt out of my bed. It is impossible! I cried out to myself, and Goubaux said well. Richard is to be forced to take his wife, and drag her towards the window; she will defend herself; the public will not bear the sight of that struggle and it will be perfectly right . . . Besides, when he lifts her up over the balcony, Richard will give the spectators a view of his wife's legs: the spectators will laugh, which is much worse than if they hissed . . . Decidedly I am a fool. There must be some way out of the difficulty! . . . But it was not easy to find means. I racked my brains for a fortnight all in vain. Goubaux had no notion of the time it took me to compose the third act. He wrote me letter after letter. I did not wish to tell him the real cause of my delay; I made all sorts of excuses: I was busy with my rehearsals; I had gone to see my daughter at her nurse's house; I had a shooting party and all sorts of other things;—all pretexts nearly as valid as those which Pierre Schlemihl gave in excuse for not having a shadow. Finally, one fine night, I woke up with a start, crying like Archimèdes Εὕρηκα! and in the same costume as he, I ran, not through the streets of Syracuse, but into the corners and recesses of my bedroom to find a tinder-box. When the candles were lit, I got back into bed and took hold of my pencil and manuscript, shrugging my shoulders in disgust at myself. Good Heavens! said I, it is as simple as Christopher Columbus's egg; only, one must break the end off! The end was broken; there was no more difficulty, Jenny no longer would have to risk showing her ankles and Richard would still throw his wife out of the window. Behold the mechanism thereof! After the words: "Ils vont trouver une femme ici!" Richard ran to the door, closed it and double-locked it. Meanwhile, Jenny ran to the window and cried from the balcony, "Help! help!" Richard followed her precipitately; Jenny fell on her knees. A noise was heard on the stairs; Richard closed the two shutters of the window on himself, shutting himself out with Jenny on the balcony. A cry was heard. Richard, pale and wiping his brow, reopened the two shutters with a blow of his fist; he

was alone on the balcony; Jenny had disappeared! The trick was taken.

By eight o'clock next morning I was writing the last line of the third act of *Richard*, and, by nine, I was with Goubaux; by ten, he had acknowledged that the window was, indeed, Jenny's only way of exit.

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

The feudal edifice and the industrial — The workmen of Lyons — M. Bouvier-Dumolard—General Roguet—Discussion and signing of the tariff regulating the price of the workmanship of fabrics—The makers refuse to submit to it—*Artificial prices* for silk-workers—Insurrection of Lyons—Eighteen millions on the civil list—Timon's calculations—An unlucky saying of M. de Montalivet

DURING this time three political events of the gravest importance took place: Lyons broke into insurrection; the civil list was debated; the Chamber passed the law abolishing the heredity of the peerage. We will pass these three events in review as rapidly as possible, but we owe it to the scheme of these Memoirs to make a note of the principal details. It must be clear that every time the country has been in trouble we have listened to its cry. Let us begin with Lyons.

Everybody knows Lyons, a poor, dirty town with a canopy of smoke and a jumble of wealth and misery, where people dare not drive through the streets in carriages, not for fear of running over the passengers but for fear of being insulted; where for forty thousand unfortunate human beings the twenty-four hours of the day contain eighteen hours of work, noise and agony. You remember Hugo's beautiful comparison in the fourth act of *Hernani*—

> "Un édifice avec deux hommes au sommet,
> Deux chefs élus auxquels tout roi-né se soumet.
> . . . . . Être ce qui commence,
> Seul, debout au plus haut de la spirale immense,

D'une foule d'États l'un sur l'autre étagés
Être la clef de voûte, et voir sous soi rangés
Les rois, et sur leurs fronts essuyer ses sandales,
Voir, au-dessous des rois, les maisons féodales,
Margraves, cardinaux, doges, ducs à fleurons;
Puis évêques, abbés, chefs de clans, hauts barons;
Puis clercs et soldats; puis, loin du faîte où nous sommes,
Dans l'ombre, tout au fond de l'abîme, les hommes."

Well, in comparison with this aristocratic pyramid, crowned by *those two halves of God, the Pope and the Emperor*, resplendent with gold and diamonds on everyone of its stages, put the popular pyramid, by the aid of which we are going to try to make you understand what Lyons is like, and you will have, not an exact pendant to it but, on the contrary, a terrible contrast. So, imagine a spiral composed of three stages: at the top, eight hundred manufacturers; in the middle, ten thousand foremen; at the base, supporting this immense weight which rests entirely on them, forty thousand workmen. Then, buzzing, gleaning, picking about this spiral like hornets round a hive, are the commissionaires, the parasites of the manufacturers, and those who supply raw materials to the trade. Now, the commercial mechanism of this immense machine is easy to understand. These commissionaires live on the manufacturers; the manufacturers live on the foremen; the foremen live on the workpeople. Add to this the Lyonnais industry, the only one by which these fifty to sixty thousand souls live, attacked at all points by competition—England producing and striking a double blow at Lyons, first because she has ceased to supply herself from there, and, secondly, because she is producing on her own account—Zurich, Bâle, Cologne and Berne, all setting up looms, and becoming rivals of the second town of France. Forty years ago, when the continental system of 1810 compelled the whole of France to supply itself from Lyons, the workman earned from four to six francs a day. Then he could easily provide for his wife and the numerous family which nearly always results from the improvidence of the working-man. But, since the fall of the Empire, for the past

seventeen years wages have been on the decline, from four francs to forty sous, then to thirty-five, then to thirty, then to twenty-five. Finally, at the time we have now reached, the ordinary weaving operative only earns eighteen sous per day for eighteen hours work. One sou per hour! . . . It is a starvation wage.

The unfortunate workmen struggled in silence for a long time, trying, as each quarter came round, to move into smaller rooms, to more noxious quarters; trying, day by day, to economise something in the shape of their meals and those of their children. But, at last, when they came face to face with the deadening effect of bad air and of starvation for want of bread, there went up from the Croix-Rousse,—appropriate names, are they not?—that is to say, from the working portion of the city—a great sob, like that which Dante heard when he was passing through the first circle of the Inferno. It was the cry of one hundred thousand sufferers. Two men were in command at Lyons, one representing the civil power, the other the military: a préfet and a general. The préfet was called Bouvier-Dumolard; the general's name was Roguet. The first, in his administrative capacity, came in contact with all classes of society, and was able to study that dark and profound misery; a misery, all the more terrible, because no remedy could be found for it, and because it went on increasing every day. As for the general, since he knew his soldiers had five sous per day, and that each of them had a ration sufficiently ample for a *canut* (silk-weaver) to feed his wife and children upon, he never troubled his head about anything else. The cry of misery of the poor famished creatures therefore affected the general and the préfet very differently. They made their separate inquiries as to the cause of this cry of misery. The workpeople demanded a tariff. General Roguet called a business meeting and demanded repressive measures. M. Bouvier-Dumolard, on the contrary, seeing the tradespeople in council, asked them for an increase of salary. On 11 October this council issued the following minute:—

"As it is a matter of public notoriety that many of the manufacturers actually pay for their fabrics at too low a rate, it is advisable that *a minimum* tariff be fixed for the price of fabrics."

Consequently, a meeting was held at the Hôtel de la Préfecture on 15 October. The tariff was discussed on both sides by twenty-two workmen appointed by their comrades, and twenty-two manufacturers who were appointed by the Chamber of Commerce.

That measure, presuming that it needed a precedent before it could be legalised, had been authorised in 1789, by the Constituent Assembly, in 1793 by the Convention and, finally, in 1811 by the Empire. Nothing was settled at the first meeting. On 21 October a new assembly was convoked at the same place, and with the same object. The manufacturers were less pressing than the workmen: that is conceivable enough: they have to give and the workmen to receive; they have to lose and the workmen to gain. The manufacturers said that having been officially appointed they could not bind their confrères. A third meeting was arranged to give them time to obtain a power of attorney. Meanwhile workpeople died of hunger. This meeting was fixed for 25 October. The life or death of forty thousand operatives, that of their fathers and mothers, their wives and their children, the very existence of over one hundred thousand persons was to be discussed at that sitting. So, the unusual, lamentable and fearful spectacle was to be seen, at ten in the morning, of this unfortunate people waiting outside in the place de la Préfecture to hear their sentence. But there was not a single weapon to be seen among those thousands of supplicants! A weapon would have prevented them from joining their hands together, and they only wanted to pray.

The préfet, terrified by that multitude, terrified of its very silence, came forward. Amongst all that sixty to eighty thousand persons of all ages and of both sexes, there were nearly thirty thousand men.

"My good people," said the préfet to them, "I beg you to withdraw—it will be to your own interests to do so. If you stay there the tariff will seem to have been imposed by your presence. Now, in order to be valid, the deliberations must be doubly free: free in reality and free in appearance."

All these famished voices with laboured breathings summoned strength to shout, "Vive le préfet!" Then they humbly retired without complaint or comment.

The tariff was signed: the result was an increase of twenty-five per cent.—not quite five sous per day. But five sous per day meant the lives of two children. So there was great joy throughout that poor multitude: the workmen illuminated their windows, and sang and danced far into the night. Their joy was very innocent, but the manufacturers thought the songs were songs of triumph and the Carmagnole dances meant a second '93. And they were made the means of refusing the tariff. A week had not gone before there were ten or a dozen refusals to carry it out. The Trades Council censured those who refused. The manufacturers met and decided that instead of a partial refusal they would all protest. And so a hundred and four manufacturers protested, declaring that they did not think themselves compelled to come to the assistance of men who were bolstered up by *artificial prices* (*des besoins factices*). *Artificial prices*, at eighteen sous per day! what sybarites! The préfet, who was a goodhearted fellow but vacillating, drew back before that protest. The Trades Council in turn drew back when they saw that the préfet had given way. Both Trades Council and préfet declared that the tariff was not at all obligatory, and that those of the manufacturers who wished to avoid the increase of wage imposed had the right to do it. Six to seven hundred, out of the eight hundred manufacturers, took advantage of the permission. The unfortunate weavers then decided to go on strike for a week, during which time they walked the town as unarmed suppliants, making no demonstration beyond affectionate and grateful salutations to those of the manufacturers who were more humane than the others and had

observed the tariff. This humble attitude only hardened the hearts of the manufacturers: one of them received a deputation of workmen with pistols on his table; another, when the wretched men said to him, "For two days we have not had a morsel of bread in our stomachs," replied, "—— Well then, we must thrust bayonets into them!" General Roguet, also, who was ill and, consequently, in a bad temper, placarded the Riot Act. The préfet realised all the evils that would accrue from putting such a measure into force, and went to General Roguet to try to get him to withdraw it. General Roguet declined to receive him. There are strange cases of blindness, and military leaders are especially liable to such fits.

Thirty thousand workpeople—unarmed, it is true, but one knows how rapidly thirty thousand men can arm themselves—were moving about the streets of Lyons; General Roguet had under his command only the 66th regiment of the line, three squadrons of dragoons, one battalion of the 13th and some companies of engineers: barely three thousand soldiers in all. He persisted in his policy of provocation. It was 19 November; the general, under the pretext of a reception for General Ordomont, commanded a review on the place Bellecour to be held on the following day. It was difficult not to see an underlying menace in that order. Unfortunately, those threatened had begun to come to the end of their patience. What one of their number had said was no poetic metaphor—many had not tasted food for forty-eight hours. Two or three more days of patience on the part of the military authority, and they need have had no more fear: the people would be dead. On 21 November—it was a Monday—four hundred silk-workers gathered at the Croix-Rousse. They proceeded to march, headed by their syndics, and with no other arms but sticks. They realised things had come to a crisis and they resolved to go from workshop to workshop, and to persuade their comrades to come out on strike with them until the tariff should be adopted in a serious and definitive manner. Suddenly, as they turned the corner of a street, they

found themselves face to face with sixty or so of the National Guard on patrol. An officer, carried away by a warlike impulse, shouted when he saw them, "Lads, let us sweep away all that *canaille*." And, drawing his sword, he sprang upon the workmen, the sixty National Guards following him with fixed bayonets. Twenty-five of the sixty National Guards were disarmed in a trice; the rest took to flight. Then, satisfied with their first victory, without changing the wholly peaceful nature of their demonstration, the workmen took each other's arms again and, marching four abreast, began to descend what is known as la Grante-Côte. But the fugitives had given the alarm. A column of the National Guard of the first legion, entirely composed of manufacturers, took up arms in hot haste, and advanced resolutely to encounter the workmen. These were two clouds, charged with electricity, hurled against each other by contrary currents and the collision meant lightning.

The column of the National Guard fired; eight workmen fell. After that, it was a species of extermination—blood had flowed. At Paris, in 1830, the people had fought for an idea, and they had fought well; at Lyons, in 1831, they were going to fight for bread and they would fight better still. A terrible, formidable, great cry went up throughout the whole of the labour quarter of the city: To arms! They are murdering our brothers!

Then anger set that vast hive buzzing which hunger had turned dumb. Each household turned into the streets every man that it contained old enough to fight; all had arms of one sort or another: one had a stick, another a fork, some had guns. In the twinkling of an eye barricades were constructed by the women and children; a group of insurgents, amidst loud cheers, carried off two pieces of cannon belonging to the National Guard of the Croix-Rousse; the National Guard not only let the cannon be taken but actually offered them. If it did not pursue the operatives into their intrenchments it would remain neutral; but if the barricades were attacked it would defend them with guns and cartridge. Next evening, forty

thousand men were armed ready, hugging the banners which bore these words, the most ominous, probably, ever traced by the bloody hand of civil war—

VIVRE EN TRAVAILLANT

OU

MOURIR EN COMBATTANT!

They killed each other through the whole of the night of the 21st, and the whole day of the 22nd. Oh! how fiercely do compatriots, fellow-citizens and brothers kill one another! Fifty years hence civil war will be the only warfare possible. By seven o'clock at night all was over, and the troops beat a retreat before the people, vanquished at every point. At midnight, General Roguet, lifted up bodily on horseback, where he shook with fever, left the town, which he found impossible to hold any longer. He withdrew by way of the faubourg Saint-Clair, under a canopy of fire, through a hail of bullets. The smell of powder revived the strength of the old soldier: he sat up on his horse, and rose in his stirrups—

"Ah!" he said, "now I can breathe once more! I feel better here than in the Hôtel de Ville drawing-rooms."

Meantime, the people were knocking at the doors of that same Hôtel de Ville which the préfet and members of the municipality had abandoned. When at the Hôtel de Ville, that palace of the people, the people felt they were the masters. But they scarcely realised this before they were afraid of their power. This power was deputed to eight persons: Lachapelle, Frédéric, Charpentier, Perenon, Rosset, Garnier, Dervieux and Filliol. The three first were workmen whose only thought was to maintain the tariff; the five others were Republicans who thought of political questions and not merely of pecuniary. The next day after that on which the eight delegates of the people had established a provisional administration, the provisional administrators were at the point of killing one another. Some wanted boldly to follow the path of insurrection; others wanted to join the party of civil authority. The latter carried

the day, and M. Bouvier-Dumolard was reinstalled. On 3 December, at noon, the Prince Royal and Marèchal Soult took possession once more of the second capital of the kingdom, and re-entered with drums beating and torches lit. The work-people were disarmed and fell back to confront their necessities and the *besoins factices* they had created, at eighteen sous per diem. The National Guard was disbanded and the town placed in a state of siege. M. Bouvier-Dumolard was dismissed.

What was the king doing during this time? His ministers, at his dictation, were preparing a minute in which he asked the Chamber for eighteen million francs for the civil list, fifteen hundred thousand francs per month, fifty thousand francs per day; without reckoning his private income of five millions, and two or three millions in dividends from special investments.

M. Laffitte had already, a year before, submitted to the committee of the Budget a minute proposing to fix the king's civil list at eighteen million francs. The committee had read the minute, and this degree of justice should be given to it: it had been afraid to bring it forward. Even that minute had left a very bad impression, so disturbing, that it had been agreed between the minister and the king, that the king should write a confidential letter to the minister, saying he had never thought of so high a sum as eighteen millions, and that the demand should be attributed to too hasty courtiers, whose devotion compromised the royal power they thought to serve. That confidential letter had been shown in confidence and had produced an excellent effect. But when it was learnt at court that the revolt at Lyons was not political, and that the *canuts* were only rising because they could not live on eighteen sous per twenty-four hours, it was deemed that the right moment had come to give the king his fifty thousand francs per day. They asked for one single man that which, a hundred and twenty leagues away, was sufficient to keep fifty-four thousand men. It was thirty-seven times more than Bonaparte had asked as First Consul, and a hundred and forty-eight times more than

the President of the United States handled. The time was all the more ill chosen in that, on 1 January 1832,—we are anticipating events by three months,—the Board of Charity of the 12th Arrondissement published the following circular—

"Twenty-four thousand persons are inscribed on the registers of the 12th Arrondissement of Paris as in need of food and clothing. Many are asking for a few trusses of straw on which to sleep."

True, the request for eighteen millions of Civil List were stated to be for royal necessities,—people's necessities differ. Thus, whilst five or six thousand wretched people of the 12th Arrondissement were asking for a few trusses of straw on which to sleep, the king *was in need of* forty-eight thousand francs for the medicaments necessary to his health; the king *was in need of* three million seven hundred and seventy-three thousand five hundred francs for his personal service; the king *was in need of* a million two hundred thousand francs to provide fuel for the kitchen fires of the royal household.

It must be admitted that these were a fair number of remedies for a king whose health had become proverbial, and who knew enough about medicine to pass a doctor's degree, in his ordinary indispositions; it was a great luxury for a king who had suppressed the offices of chief equerry, master of the hounds, master of ceremonies and all the great state expenses, and who had set forth the programme, new to France, of a small court half-bourgeois and half-military; also it was a good deal of wood and coal to allow a king who possessed the finest forests in the state, either by right of inheritance or as appanage. True, it was calculated that the sale of wood annually made by the king, which would be sufficient to warm a tenth part of France, was not sufficient to warm the underground kitchen fires of the Palais-Royal. People calculated differently. It was the time of calculations. There was, at that period, a great calculator, since dead, called Timon the misanthrope. Ah! if only he were still alive! . . . He reckoned that eighteen millions of Civil List amounted to the fiftieth part of

the Budget of France; the contribution of three of our most densely populated departments,—Seine, Seine-Inférieure and Nord; the land tax paid to the state by eighteen other departments; four times more than flowed into the state coffers from Calais, Boulonnais, Artois and their six hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, by way of contributions of every kind in a year; three times more than the salt tax brought in; twice more than the government winnings from its lottery; half what the monopoly of the sale of tobacco produced; half what is annually granted for the upkeep of our bridges, roads, harbours and canals—an expenditure which gives work to over fifteen thousand persons; nine times more than the whole budget for public education, including its support, subsidies, national scholarships; double the cost of the foreign office, which pays thirty ambassadors and ministers-plenipotentiary, fifty secretaries to the embassies and legations, one hundred and fifty consuls-general, consuls, vice-consuls, dragomans and consular agents; ninety head clerks and office clerks, under-clerks, employees, copyists, translators and servants; the pay of an army of fifty-five thousand men, officers of all ranks, non-commissioned officers, corporals and soldiers, a third more than the cost of the whole staff of the administration of justice; —note that in saying that justice is paid for, we do not mean to say that it ought to be given up. In short, a sum sufficient to provide work for a whole year to sixty-one thousand six hundred and forty-three workmen belonging to the country! . . . Although the bourgeoisie were so enthusiastic over their king, this calculation none the less made them reflect.

Then, as if it seemed that every misfortune were to be piled up because of that fatal Civil List of 1832, M. de Montalivet must needs take upon himself to find good reasons for making the contributors support the Budget by saying in the open Chamber—

"If luxury is banished from the king's palace, it will soon be banished from the homes of his *subjects!*"

At these words there was a prompt and loud explosion, as though the powder magazine at Grenelle had been set on fire.

"Men who make kings are not the subjects of the kings they create!" exclaims M. Marchal.

"There are no more subjects in France."

"There is a king, nevertheless," insinuates M. Dupin, who held a salary direct from that king.

"There are no more subjects," repeats M. Leclerc-Lasalle. "Order! order! order!"

"I do not understand the importance of the interruption," replies M. de Montalivet.

"It is an insult to the chamber," cries M. Labôissière.

"Order! order! order!" The president rings his bell.—"Order!! order!! order!!"

The president puts his hat on. "Order!!! order!!! order!!!"

The president breaks up the sitting. The deputies go out, crying "Order! order! order!"

The whole thing was more serious than one would have supposed at the first glance: it was a slur on the bourgeois reputation which had made Louis-Philippe King of France. On the same day, under the presidency of Odilon Barrot, a hundred and sixty-seven members of the Chamber signed a protest against the word *subject*. The Civil List was reduced to fourteen millions. A settlement was made on the queen in case of the decease of the king; an annual allowance of a million francs was granted to M. le duc d'Orléans. This was a triumph, but a humiliating triumph; the debates of the Chamber upon the word *subject*, M. de Cor's letters—Heavens! what were we going to do? We were confusing Timon the misanthrope with M. de Cormenin!—the letters of Timon, Dupont (de l'Eure's) condemnation, the jests of the Republican papers, all these had in an important degree taken the place of the voice of the slave of old who cried behind the triumphant emperors, "Cæsar, remember that thou art mortal!" At the same time a voice cried, "Peerage, remember that thou art mortal!" It was the voice of the *Moniteur* proclaiming the abolition of heredity in the peerage.

CHAPTER II

Death of *Mirabeau*—The accessories of *Charles VII.*—A shooting party—Montereau—A temptation I cannot resist—Critical position in which my shooting companions and I find ourselves—We introduce ourselves into an empty house by breaking into it at night—Inspection of the premises—Improvised supper—As one makes one's bed, so one lies on it—I go to see the dawn rise—Fowl and duck shooting—Preparations for breakfast—Mother Galop

IT will be seen the times were not at all encouraging for literature. But there was through that highly strung period such a vital turgescence that enough force remained in the youth of the day, who had just been making a political disturbance on the boulevard Saint-Denis or the place Vendôme, to create a literary disturbance at the Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin or the Odéon. I think I have said that *Mirabeau* had been played, and had passed like a shadow without even being able, when dying, to bequeathe the name of its author to the public: the company of the Odéon, therefore, was entirely at the disposal of *Charles VII.*

Whether Harel had returned to my opinion, that the play would not make money, or whether he had a fit of niggardliness, a rare happening, I must confess, when Mademoiselle Georges was taking part in a play, he would not risk any expense, not even to the extent of the stag that kills Raymond in the first act, not even for the armour which clothes Charles VII. in the fourth. The result was that I was obliged to go to Raincy myself to kill a stag, and to get it stuffed at my own expense; then I had to go and borrow a complete set of armour from the Artillery Museum, which they obligingly lent me in remembrance of the service

that I had rendered their establishment on 29 July 1830, by saving a portion of the armour of Francis I. However, the rehearsals proceeded with such energy that, on 5 September, the opening day of the shooting season having arrived, I had no hesitation about leaving *Charles VII.* to the strength of the impetus that I had given it, and, as M. Étienne would say, I went to woo Diana at the expense of the Muses. True, our Muses, if the illustrious Academician is to be believed, were but sorry ones!

I had decided to undertake this cynegetic jollification because of an unlimited permission from Bixio. That permission had been given to us by our common friend Dupont-Delporte, who, by virtue of our discretionary powers, we had just made sub-lieutenant in the army, together with a delightful lad called Vaillant, who, with Louis Desnoyers, managed a paper called the *Journal Rose*, and also the son of Mademoiselle Duchesnois, who, I believe, died bravely in Algeria. As to Vaillant, I know not what became of him, or whether he followed up his military career; but, if he be still living, no matter where he may be, I offer him greeting, although a quarter of a century has rolled by. Now this permission was indeed calculated to tempt a sportsman. Dupont-Delporte introduced us to his father, and begged him to place his château and estates at our disposition. The château was situated three-quarters of a league from Montigny, a little village which itself was three leagues from Montereau. We left by diligence at six o'clock on the morning of 4 September, and we reached Montereau about four in the afternoon. I was not yet acquainted with Montereau, doubly interesting, historically, by reason of the assassination of the Duke of Burgundy Jean Sans-Peur, and from the victory which, in the desperate struggle of 1814, Napoleon won there over the Austrians and the Würtemburgers. Our caravan was made up of Viardot, author of the *Histoire des Arabes en Espagne*, and, later, husband of that adorable and all round actress called Pauline Garcia; of Bessas-Lamégie, then deputy-mayor of the 10th arrondissement; of Bixio,

and of Louis Boulanger. Whilst Bixio, who knew the town, went in search of a carriage to take us to Montigny, Boulanger, Bessas-Lamégie, Viardot and I set to work to turn over the two important pages of history embedded in the little town, written four centuries ago. The position of the bridge perfectly explained the scene of the assassination of the Duke of Burgundy. Boulanger drew for me on the spot a rough sketch, which served me later in my romance of *Isabeau de Bavière*, and in my legend of the *Sire de Giac*. Then we went to see the sword of the terrible duke, which hung in the crypt of the church. If one formed an idea of the man by the sword one would be greatly deceived: imagine the ball swords of Francis II. or of Henri III.! When we had visited the church we had finished with the memories of 1417, and we passed on to those of 1814. We rapidly climbed the ascent of Surville, and found ourselves on the plateau where Napoleon, once more an artilleryman, thundered, with pieces of cannon directed by himself, against the Würtemburgers fighting in the town. It was there that, in getting off his horse and whipping his boot with his horse-whip, he uttered this remarkable sentence, an appeal from Imperial doubt to Republican genius—

"Come, Bonaparte, let us save Napoleon!"

Napoleon was victor, but was not saved: the modern Sisyphus had the rock of the whole of Europe incessantly falling back upon him.

It was five o'clock. We had three long leagues of country to cover; three leagues of country, no matter in what department, were it even in that of Seine-et-Marne, always means five leagues of posting. Now, five leagues of posting in a country stage-waggon is at least a four hours' journey. We should only arrive at M. Dupont-Delporte's house, whom not one of us knew, at nine or half-past nine at night. Was he a loving enough father to forgive us such an invasion, planting ourselves on him at unawares? Bixio replied that, with the son's letter, we were sure to be made welcome by the father, no matter at what hour of the day or night we knocked at his door.

We started in that belief, ourselves and our dogs all heaped together in the famous stage-waggon in question, which very soon gave us a sample of its powers by taking an hour and a quarter to drive the first league. We were just entering upon the second when, in passing by a field of lucerne, I was seized with the temptation to go into it with the dog of one of my fellow-sportsmen. I do not know by what misfortune I had not my own. My companions sang out to me that shooting had not yet begun; but my sole reply was that that was but one reason more for finding game there. And I added that, if I succeeded in killing a brace of partridges or a hare, it would add some sauce to the supper which M. Dupont-Delporte would be obliged to give us. This argument won over my companions. The waggon was stopped; I took Viardot's dog and entered the field of lucerne. If any sort of gamekeeper appeared, the waggon was to proceed on its way, and I undertook to outdistance the above-mentioned gamekeeper. Those who knew my style of walking had no uneasiness on this score. The journey I made there and back from Crépy to Paris, shooting by the way with my friend Paillet, will be recalled to mind. Scarcely had I taken twenty steps in the field of lucerne before a great leveret, three-quarters face, started under the dog's nose. It goes without saying that that leveret was killed. As no gamekeeper had appeared on the scene at the noise of my firing, I took my leveret by its hind legs and quietly remounted the stage-waggon. What a fine thing is success! Everybody congratulated me, even the most timorous. Three-quarters of a league farther on was a second field of lucerne. A fresh temptation, fresh argument, and fresh yielding. At the very entrance into the field the dog came across game, and stopped, pointing. A covey of a dozen or so of partridges started up; I fired my first shot into the very middle of the covey: two fell, and a third fell down at my second shot. This would make us a roast which, if not quite sufficient, would at least be presentable. Again I climbed into the coach in the midst of the cheering of the travellers. You will see directly that these details, trivial as

they may appear at the first glance, are not without their importance. I had a good mind to continue a hunt which seemed like becoming the parallel to the miraculous draught of fishes; but night was falling, and compelled me to content myself with my leveret and three partridges. We drove on for another couple of hours, until we found ourselves opposite a perfectly black mass. This was the château of M. Dupont-Delporte.

"Ah!" said the driver, "here we are."

"What, have we arrived?"

"Yes."

"Is this the château d'Esgligny?"

"That is the château d'Esgligny."

We looked at one another.

"But everybody is asleep," said Bessas.

"We will create a revolution," added Viardot.

"Messieurs," suggested Boulanger, "I think we should do well to sleep in the carriage, and only present ourselves to-morrow morning."

"Why! M. Dupont-Delporte would never forgive us," said Bixio, and, jumping down from the carriage, he resolutely advanced towards the door and rang.

Meanwhile the driver, who was paid in advance, and who had shuddered at Boulanger's suggestion of using his stage-waggon for a tent, quietly turned his horse's head towards Montigny, and suddenly departed at a trot which proved that his horse felt much relieved at getting rid of his load. For a moment we thought of stopping him, but before the debate that began upon this question was ended, driver, horse and vehicle had disappeared in the darkness. Our boats were burned behind us! The situation became all the more precarious in that Bixio had rung, knocked, flung stones at the door, all in vain, for nobody answered. A terrifying idea began to pass through our minds: the château, instead of containing sleeping people, seemed to contain nobody at all. This was a melancholy prospect for travellers not one of whom knew the country, and all of whom had the appetites of ship-

wrecked men. Bixio ceased ringing, ceased knocking, ceased throwing stones; the assault had lasted a quarter of an hour, and had not produced any effect: it was evident that the château was deserted. We put our heads together in council, and each advanced his own view. Bixio persisted in his of entering, even if it meant scaling the walls; he answered for M. Dupont-Delporte's approval of everything he did.

"Look here," I said to him, "will you take the responsibility on yourself?"

"Entirely."

"Will you guarantee us, if not judicial impunity, at all events civil absolution?"

"Yes."

"Very well; will somebody light a bit of paper to give me light?"

A smoker (alas! from about that period there were smokers to be found everywhere) drew a match-box from his pocket, twisted up half a newspaper, and lighted me with his improvised beacon. In a trice I had pulled off the lock, by the help of my screw-driver. The door opened by itself when the lock was off. We found ourselves inside the park. Before going farther we thought we ought to put back the lock in its place. Then, feeling our way through the tortuous walks, we attained the main entrance. By chance the emigrants, probably counting on the first door to be a sufficient obstacle, had not shut that of the château. So we entered the château and wandered about among the salons, bedrooms and kitchens. Everywhere we found traces of a hasty departure, and that it had been incomplete owing to the haste with which it had been undertaken. In the kitchen the turnspit was in position, and there were two or three saucepans and a stove. In the dining-room were a dozen chairs and a table; eighteen mattresses were in the linen-room; and, in the cupboard of one room thirty pots of jam! Each fresh discovery led to shouts of joy equal to those uttered by Robinson Crusoe on his various visits to the wrecked vessel. We had the wherewithal to cook a meal, to sit down and to sleep;

furthermore, there were thirty pots of jam for our dessert. It is true we had nothing for our supper. But at that moment I drew my hare and the partridges from my pocket, announcing that I was prepared to skin the hare if the others would pluck the partridges. When hare and partridges were skinned and plucked I undertook to put them all in the spit. We only wanted bread. Here Boulanger came on the scene with a shout of joy. In order to draw the view of the bridge of Montereau, or, rather, in order to rub out the incorrect lines in his sketch, he had sent an urchin to fetch some crumbly bread. The lad had brought him a two-pound loaf. The loaf had been stuffed into someone or other's game bag. We searched all the game bags, and the loaf of bread was found in Bessas-Lamégie's bag. At this sight we all echoed Boulanger's shout of joy. The two pounds of bread were placed under an honourable embargo; but, for greater security, Bixio put in his pocket the key of the sideboard in which the bread was enclosed. After this I began to skin my hare, and my scullion-knaves began to pluck the partridges.

Bessas-Lamégie, who had announced that he had no culinary proclivities, was sent with a lantern to find any available kind of fuel. He brought back two logs, stating that the wood-house was abundantly stocked, and that consequently we need not be afraid of making a good fire. The hearth-place flamed with joy after this assurance. In a kitchen table drawer we found a few old iron forks. We were not so particular as to insist upon silver ones. The table was laid as daintily as possible. We each had our knife, and, what was more, a flask full of wine or brandy or kirsch. I, who drink but little wine and am not fond of either brandy or kirsch, had gooseberry syrup. I was therefore the only one who could not contribute to the general stock of beverages; but they forgave me in virtue of the talents I showed as cook. They saw clearly that I was a man of resource, and they praised my adroitness in killing the game and my skill in roasting it. It was nearly one in the morning when we lay down in our clothes on the mattresses. The Spartans took only one

mattress; the Sybarites took two. I was the first to wake, when it was scarcely daylight. In the few moments that elapsed between the extinction of the light and the coming of sleep I had reflected about the future, and promised myself as soon as I waked to look about for a village or hamlet where we could supply ourselves with provisions. Therefore, like Lady Malbrouck, I climbed up as high as I could get, not, however, to a tower, but to the attics. A belfry tower was just visible in the distance, through the trees, probably belonging to the village of Montigny. The distance at which it was situated inspired me with extremely sad reflections, but just then, dropping my eyes, melancholy-wise towards the earth, I saw a fowl picking about in a pathway; then, in another path, another fowl; then a duck dabbling in a kind of pond. It was evident that this was the rear-guard of a poultry yard which had escaped death by some intelligent subterfuge. I went downstairs into the kitchen, got my gun, put two charges of cartridges in my pocket, and ran out into the garden. Three shots gave me possession of the duck and fowls, and we had food for breakfast. Furthermore, we would dispatch two of our party to a village for eggs and bread, wine and butter. At the sound of my three shots the windows opened, and I saw a row of heads appear which looked like so many notes of interrogation. I showed my two fowls in one hand and my duck in the other. The result was immediate. At the sight of my simple gesture shouts of admiration rose from the spectators. At supper the night before, we had had roast meats; at breakfast, we were going to have both roast and stew. I thought I would stew the duck with turnips, as it seemed of a ripe age. Enthusiasm produces great devotion: when I suggested drawing lots as to who should go to the village of Montigny to find butter, eggs, bread and wine, two men of goodwill volunteered from the ranks. These were Boulanger and Bixio, who, not being either shooters or cooks, desired to make themselves useful to society according to their limited means. Their services were accepted; an old basket was discovered, the bottom of which was made strong

with twine! Bixio set the example of humility by taking the empty basket,—Boulanger undertook to carry back the full basket. I set the rest of my people to work to pluck the fowls and the duck, and I undertook a voyage of discovery. It was impossible that a château so well provisioned, even in the absence of its owners, should not include among its appurtenances an orchard and a kitchen-garden. It was necessary to discover both. I was without a compass, but, by the aid of the rising sun, I could make out the south from the north. Therefore the orchard and the kitchen-garden would, naturally, be situated to the south of the park. When I had gone about a hundred yards I was walking about among quantities of fruit and vegetables. I had but to make my choice. Carrots and turnips and salads for vegetables—pears, apples, currants for fruit. I returned loaded with a double harvest. Bessas-Lamégie, who saw me coming from afar, took me for Vertumnus, the god of gardens. Ten minutes later the god of gardens had made room for the god of cooking. An apron found by Viardot round my body, a paper cap constructed by Bessas on my head, I looked like Comus or Vatel. I possessed a great advantage over the latter in that, not expecting any fish, I did not inflict on myself the punishment of severing my carotid artery because the fishmonger was late. To conclude, my scullion lads had not lost any time; the fowls and the duck were plucked, and a brazier of Homeric proportions blazed in the fireplace.

Suddenly, just at the moment when I was spitting my two fowls, loud cries were heard in the courtyard, then in the antechamber, then on the stairs, and a furious old woman, bonnetless and thoroughly scared, ran into the kitchen. It was Mother Galop.

CHAPTER III

Who Mother Galop was—Why M. Dupont-Delporte was absent—How I quarrelled with Viardot—Rabelais's quarter of an hour—Providence No. 1.—The punishment of Tantalus—A waiter who had not read Socrates—Providence No. 2—A breakfast for four—Return to Paris

MOTHER GALOP was M. Dupont-Delporte's kitchen-maid; she was specially employed to go errands between the château and the village, and they called her Mother Galop because of the proverbial rapidity with which she accomplished this kind of commission. I never knew her other name, and never had the curiosity to inquire what it was. Mother Galop had seen a column of smoke coming out of the chimney in comparison with which the column that led the children of Israel in the desert was but as a vapour, and she had come at a run, never doubting that her master's château was invaded by a band of incendiaries. Great was her astonishment when she saw a cook and two or three kitchen-lads spitting and plucking chickens. She naturally asked us who we were and what we were doing in *her kitchen*. We replied that M. Dupont-Delporte's son, being on the eve of marrying, and intending to celebrate his nuptials at the château, had sent us on in advance to take possession of the culinary departments. She could believe what she liked of the story; my opinion is that she did not believe very much of it; but what did that matter to us? She was not able to prevent us; we could, indeed, have shown her Dupont-Delporte's letter, but two reasons prevented us from doing so. In the first place, because Bixio had it in his pocket and had carried it off to the market; secondly, because Mother Galop did not know how to read! We in our turn interrogated Mother

Galop, with all the tact of which we were capable, concerning the absence of all the family, and the desertion of the chateau.

M. Dupont-Delporte, senior, had been appointed préfet of Seine-Inférieure, and he had moved house rapidly a week ago, leaving his château and what remained therein under the surveillance of Mother Galop. As has been seen, Mother Galop fulfilled her orders scrupulously. The arrival of Mother Galop had its good side as well as its bad: it was a censorship; but, at the same time, it meant a housekeeper for us. The upshot of it was that, in consideration of a five-franc piece which was generously granted her by myself, we had both plates and serviettes at our dejeuner. Bixio and Boulanger arrived as the fowls were accomplishing their final turn on the spit, and as Mother Galop was serving up the stewed duck. An omelette of twenty-four eggs completed the meal. Then, admirably fortified, we set off on our shooting expedition. We had not fired four shots before we saw the gamekeeper running up in hot haste. This was just what we hoped would happen; he could read: he accepted our sub-lieutenant's letter as bona-fide, undertook to take us all over the estate, and to reassure Mother Galop, whom our metamorphoses from cooks to sportsmen had inspired with various fresh fears in addition to those which had troubled her at first, and which had never been entirely allayed. A sportsman minus a dog (it will be recollected that this was my social position) is a very disagreeable being, seeing that, if he wants to kill anything, he must be a Pollux or a Pylades or a Pythias to some shooter who has a dog. I began by giving the dubious advantage of my proximity to Bessas-Lamégie, the shooting companion with whom I was the most intimately connected. Unluckily, Bessas had a new dog which was making its first début, and which was in its first season. Generally, dogs—ordinary ones at least—hunt with their noses down and their tails in the air. Bessas's dog had adopted the opposite system. The result was that he looked as though he had come from between the legs of a riding-master, and not from the hands of a keeper; to such an extent that, at the end of an hour's time, I advised

Bessas to saddle his dog or harness him, but not to shoot with him any more. Viardot, on the other hand, had a delightful little bitch who pointed under the muzzle of the gun, standing like a stock and returning at the first call of the whistle. I abandoned Bessas and began to play with Viardot, whom I knew least, the scene between Don Juan and M. Dimanche! In the very middle of the scene a covey of partridges started up. Viardot fired two shots after them and killed one. I did the same; only, I killed two. We continued to shoot and to kill in this proportion. But soon I made a mistake. A hare started in front of Viardot's dog. I ought to have given him time to fire his two shots, and not to have fired until he had missed. I drew first and the hare rolled over before Viardot had had time to put his gun to his shoulder. Viardot looked askance at me; and with good reason. We entered a field of clover. I fired my two shots at a couple of partridges, both of which fell disabled. The services of a dog were absolutely necessary. I called Viardot's; but Viardot also called her, and Diane, like a well-trained animal, followed her master and took no notice of me and my two partridges. No one is so ready to risk his soul being sent to perdition as a sportsman who loses a head of game: with still greater reason when he loses two. I called the dog belonging to Bessas-Lamégie, and Romeo came; that was his name, and no doubt it was given him because he held his head up, searching for his Juliet on every balcony. Romeo then came, pawed, pranced about and jumped, but did not deign for an instant to trouble himself about my two partridges. I swore by all the saints of Paradise,—my two partridges were lost, and I had fallen out with Viardot! Viardot, indeed, left us next day, pretending he had an appointment to keep in Paris which he had forgotten. I have never had the chance of making it up with him since that day, and twenty years have now passed by. Therefore, as he is a charming person with whom I do not wish any longer to remain estranged, I here tender him my very humble apologies and my very sincere regards. Next day it was Bessas who left us. He had no need to search for

an excuse; his dog provided him with a most plausible one. I again advised him to have Romeo trained for the next steeple-chase, and to bet on him at Croix-de-Berny, but to renounce working him as a shooting dog. I do not know if he took my advice. I remained the only shooter, and consequently the only purveyor to the party, which did me the justice to say that, if they ran any risk of dying of hunger, it would not be at the château d'Esgligny. But it was at Montereau that this misfortune nearly happened to us all. We had settled up our accounts with Mother Galop; we had liquidated our debt with the gamekeeper; we had paid the peasants the thousand and one contributions which they levy on the innocent sportsman, for a dog having crossed a potato field, or for a hare which has spoiled a patch of beetroot; we had returned to Montereau: here we had supped abundantly; finally, we had slept soundly in excellent beds, when, next day, in making up our accounts, we perceived that we were fifteen francs short, even if the waiter was not tipped, to be even with our host. Great was our consternation when this deficit was realised. Not one of us had a watch, or possessed the smallest pin, or could lay hands on the most ordinary bit of jewellery. We gazed at one another dumbfounded; each of us knew well that he had come to the end of his own resources, but he had reckoned upon his neighbour. The waiter came to bring us the bill, and wandered about the room expecting his money. We withdrew to the balcony as though to take the air. We were stopping at the *Grand Monarque!*—a magnificent sign-board represented a huge red head surmounted by a turban. We had not even the chance, seized by Gérard, at Montmorency, of proposing to our host to paint a sign for him! I was on the point of frankly confessing our embarrassment to the hotel-keeper, and of offering him my rifle as a deposit, when Bixio, whose eyes were mechanically scanning the opposite house, uttered a cry. He had just read these words, above three hoops from which dangled wooden candles—

CARRÉ, DEALER IN GROCERIES

In desperate situations everything may be of importance. We crowded round Bixio, asking him what was the matter with him.

"Listen," he said, "I do not wish to raise false hopes; but I was at school with a Carré who came from Montereau. If, by good fortune, the Carré of that sign happens to be the same as my Carré, I shall not hesitate to ask him to lend me the fifteen francs we need."

"Whilst you are about it," I said to Bixio, "ask him for thirty."

"Why thirty?"

"I presume—you have not reckoned that we must go on foot?"

"Ah! good gracious! that is true! Here goes for thirty, then! Gentlemen, pray that he may be my Carré; I will go and see."

Bixio went downstairs, and we stayed behind upon the balcony, full of anxiety; the waiter still hanging round. Bixio went out of the hotel, passed two or three times up and down in front of the shop unostentatiously; then, suddenly, he rushed into it! And, through the transparent window-panes, we saw him clasp a fat youth in his arms, who wore a round jacket and an otter-skin cap. The sight was so touching that tears came into our eyes. Then we saw no more; the two old school-fellows disappeared into the back of the shop. Ten minutes later both came out of the shop, crossed the street and entered the hotel. It was evident that Bixio had succeeded in his borrowing; otherwise, had he been refused, we presumed that the Rothschild of Montereau would not have had the face to show himself. We were not mistaken.

"Gentlemen," said Bixio, entering, "let me introduce to you M. Carré, my school friend, who not only is so kind as to get us out of our difficulty by lending us thirty francs, but also invites us to take a glass of cognac or of curaçao at his house, according to your several tastes."

The school friend was greeted enthusiastically. Boulanger, whom we had elected our banker, who for half an hour

enjoyed a sinecure, settled accounts with the waiter, generously giving him fifty centimes for himself, and put fourteen francs ten sous into his pocket in reserve for the boat. Then we hurried down the steps, extremely happy at having extricated ourselves even more cleverly than M. Alexandre Duval's *Henri V.* The service which we had just received from our friend Carré—he had asked for our friendship, and we had hastened to respond—did not prevent us from doing justice to his cognac, his black-currant cordial and his curaçao; they were excellent. In fact, we took two glasses of each liqueur to make sure that it was of good quality. Then, as time was pressing, we said to our new friend, in the phrase made famous by King Dagobert: "The best of friends must part," and we expressed our desire to go to the boat. Carré wished to do us the honours of his natal town to the last, and offered to accompany us. We accepted. It was a good thing we did. We had been misinformed about the fares of places in the boat: we wanted nine francs more to complete the necessary sum for going by water. Carré drew ten francs from his pocket with a lordly air, and gave them to Bixio. Our debt had attained the maximum of forty francs. There remained then twenty sous for our meals on board the boat. It was a modest sum; but still, with twenty sous between four people, we should not die of hunger. Besides, was not Providence still over us? Might not one of us also come across his Carré? Expectant of this fresh manifestation of Providence, we each pressed Bixio's friend in our arms, and we passed from the quay to the boat. It was just time; the bell was ringing for departure, and the boat was beginning to move. Our adieux lasted as long as we could see each other. Carré flourished his otter-skin cap, while we waved our handkerchiefs. There is nothing like a new friendship for tenderness! At length the moment came when, prominent objects though Carré and his cap had been, both disappeared on the horizon.

We then began our examination of the boat; but after taking stock of each passenger we were obliged to recognise, for the time being at anyrate, that Providence had failed us.

That certainty led to all the greater sadness among us, as each stomach, roused by the exhilarating morning air, began to clamour for food. We heard all round us, as though in mockery of our wretchedness, a score of voices shouting—

"Waiter! two cutlets! . . . Waiter! a beefsteak! . . . Waiter! *un thé complet!*"

The waiters ran about bringing the desired comestibles, and calling out in their turn as they passed by us—

"Do not you gentlemen require anything? No lunch? You are the only gentlemen who have not asked for something!"

At last I replied impatiently: "No; we are waiting for some one who should join us at the landing-stage of Fontainebleau." Then, turning to my companions in hunger, I said to them—

"Upon my word, gentlemen, he who sleeps dines; now, the greater includes the less, so I am going to take my lunch sleeping."

I settled myself in a corner. I had even then the faculty which I have since largely perfected, I can sleep pretty nearly when I like. Hardly was I resting on my elbow before I was asleep. I do not know how long I had been given up to the deceptive illusion of sleep before a waiter came up to me and repeated three times in an ascending scale—

"Monsieur! monsieur!! monsieur!!!"

I woke up.

"What is it?" I said to him.

"Monsieur said that he and his friends would breakfast with a person he expected at the landing-place at Fontainebleau."

"Did I say that?"

"Monsieur said so."

"You are sure?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well then, it is time monsieur ordered his lunch, seeing that we are approaching Fontainebleau."

"Already?"

"Ah! monsieur has slept a long time!"

"You might have left me to sleep still longer."

"But monsieur's friend . . ."

"Monsieur's friend would have found him if he came."

"But is not monsieur sure, then, of meeting his friend?"

"Waiter, when you have read Socrates you will know how rare a friend is, and, consequently, how little certainty there is of meeting one!"

"But monsieur can still order lunch for three; if monsieur's friend comes, another cover can be added."

"You say we are nearing Fontainebleau?" I replied, eluding the question.

"In five minutes we shall be opposite the landing-stage."

"Then I will go and see if my friend is coming."

I went up on the deck, and mechanically glanced towards the landing-stage. We were still too far off to distinguish anything; but, assisted by tide and steam, the boat rapidly advanced. Gradually individuals grouped on the bank could be separately distinguished. Then outlines could be more clearly seen, then the colour of their clothes, and, finally, their features. My gaze was fastened, almost in spite of myself, upon an individual who was waiting in the middle of ten other persons, and whom I believed I recognised. But it was most unlikely! . . . However, it was very like him, . . . if it were he, what luck. . . . No, it seemed impossible. . . . Nevertheless, it was, indeed, his shape and figure and physiognomy. The boat approached nearer still. The individual who was the object of my attention got into the boat to come on board the steamer, which stopped to take up passengers. When half-way to the steamer the individual recognised me and waved his hand to me.

"Is that you?" I shouted.

"Yes, it is I," he replied.

I had found my Carré, only his name was Félix Deviolaine; and, instead of being just an ordinary school-fellow, he was my cousin. I ran to the ladder and flung myself into his arms with as much effusion as Bixio had into Carré's.

"Are you alone?" he asked me.

"No; I am with Bixio and Boulanger."

"Have you lunched?"

"No."

"Well, shall I have lunch with you?"

"Say, rather, may we have lunch with you?"

"It is the same thing."

"Nothing of the kind."

I explained the difference between his lunching with us and we with him. He understood perfectly. The waiter stood by, serviette in hand; the amusing fellow had followed me as a shark follows a starving ship.

"Lunch for four!" I said, and, provided that it includes two bottles of burgundy, eight cutlets, a fowl and a salad, you can then add what you like in the way of hors-d'œuvre and entremets" Lunch lasted until we reached Melun. At four that afternoon we landed at the quay of the Hôtel de Ville, and next day I resumed my rehearsals of *Charles VII.*

CHAPTER IV

Le Masque de fer—Georges' suppers—The garden of the Luxembourg by moonlight—M. Scribe and the *Clerc de la Basoche*—M. d'Épagny and *Le Clerc et le Théologien*—Classical performances at the Théâtre-Français—*Les Guelfes*, by M. Arnault—Parenthesis—Dedicatory epistle to the prompter

IN those days nothing had yet tarnished the spirit of that juvenile love of the capital which had induced me to overcome many obstacles in order to transport myself thither. Three or four days spent away from the literary and political whirlpool of Paris seemed to me a long absence. During the month I had stayed at Trouville I felt as though the world had stood still. I took but the time to fly home to change my shooting dress,—as regards the game, my travelling companions had seen to that,—to make inquiries about things that might have happened affecting myself, and then I went to the Odéon. It took me a good half-hour's fast walking, and an hour in a fly, to go from my rue Saint-Lazare to the Odéon Theatre. Railways were not in existence then, or I might have followed the method pursued by a friend of mine who had an uncle living at the barrière du Maine. When he went to see his uncle—and this happened twice a week, Thursdays and Sundays—he took the railway on the right bank and arrived by the railway on the left bank. He only had Versailles to cross through, and there he was at his uncle's house!

They had rehearsed conscientiously, but the rehearsals had not been hurried at all. The last piece to be performed was the *Masque de fer*, by MM. Arnault and Fournier. Lockroy had been magnificent in it, and although the play was acted *without Georges* it brought in money. I say, although it was

played *without Georges*, because it was a superstition at the Odéon, a superstition accredited by Harel, that no piece paid if Georges was not acting in it. Ligier, a most conscientious actor, though almost always compelled to struggle against the drawback of being too small in figure and having too coarse a voice, had been a genuine success in his part, greater than I can remember any actor to have had in a rôle created by himself. What a capital company the Odéon was at that period! Count up on your fingers those I am about to name, and you will find six or eight players of the first rank: Frédérick-Lemaître, Ligier, Lockroy, Duparay, Stockleit, Vizentini, Mademoiselle Georges, Madame Moreau-Sainti who was privileged always to remain beautiful, and Mlle. Noblet who unfortunately was not equally privileged to remain for ever virtuous. Mlle. Noblet, poor woman, who had just played Paula for me, and who was about to play Jenny; Mlle. Noblet, whose great dark eyes and beautiful voice and melancholy face gave birth to hopes which now are so utterly quenched at the Théâtre-Français that, although she is still young, people have not known for the past ten years whether she, who was so full of promise, is still alive or dead!

Why were these eclipses of talent so frequent at the theatre of Richelieu? This is a question which we will examine on the first suitable opportunity that presents itself. Let Bressant, who has played the Prince of Wales admirably for me in *Kean* during the past fifteen or sixteen years, look to his laurels and cling tight to his new repertory, or probably he will be lost sight of like the others.

I stayed behind to supper with Georges. I have already said how very charming her supper-parties were,—very unlike those of Mlle. Mars, although often both were attended by the same people. But, in this case, the guests in general took their cue from the mistress of the house. Mademoiselle Mars was always a little stiff and somewhat formal, and she seemed as though she were putting her hand over the mouths of even her most intimate friends, not letting them give vent to their wit beyond a certain point. While Georges, a thoroughly good

sort beneath her imperial airs, allowed every kind of wit, and laughed unrestrainedly, Mlle. Mars, on the other hand, for the greater part of the time, only smiled half-heartedly. Then, how scatter-brained, extravagant, abandoned we were at Georges' suppers! How evident it was seen that all the convivial spirits—Harel, Janin, Lockroy—did not know how to contain themselves! When Becquet, who was a leading light at Mlle. Mars', adventured into our midst at Mlle. Georges', he passed into the condition of a mere looker-on. And the type of mind was entirely different—Harel's, caustic and retaliating; Janin's, good-natured and merry; Lockroy's, refined and aristocratic. Poor Becquet! one was obliged to wake him up, to prick him and to spur him. He reminded one of a respectable drunkard asleep in the midst of fireworks. Then, after these suppers, which lasted till one or two in the morning, we went into the garden. The garden had a door in it leading out on the Luxembourg and the Chamber of Peers, the key of which Cambacérès lent Harel on the strength of his having once been his secretary. The result was that we had a royal park for the discussion of our dessert. Gardens of classical architecture, like Versailles, the Tuileries and the Luxembourg are very fine seen by night and by the light of the moon. Each statue looks like a phantom; each fountain of water a cascade of diamonds. Oh! those nights of 1829 and 1830 and 1831! Were they really as glorious as I think them? Or was it because I was only twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age that made them seem so fragrant, so peaceful and so full of stars? . . .

But to return. The Théâtre-Français, to our great joy, continued, by its failures, to afford a melancholy contrast to the success of its confrères of the boulevards and the outre-Seine. They had just played a five-act piece entitled the *Clerc et le Théologien*, which had simply taken as its subject the death of Henri III., a subject treated with much talent by Vitet in his *Scènes historiques*. Those who have forgotten the *États de Blois* and the *Mort d'Henri III.* can re-read the two works, that have had a great influence on the literary re-

nascence of 1830, which, according to the amiable M. P——, has yet to produce its fruit. M. P—— is a gentleman whom I propose to take by the collar and give a thorough good shaking, when I happen to have eau de Cologne on my handkerchief and gloves on my hands.

A strange incident preceded the performance of the *Clerc et le Théologien*. The play, written in collaboration by MM. Scribe and d'Épagny, and accepted by the Odéon Theatre, had been stopped by the censor of 1830. Good old Censorship! It is the same in all ages! There indeed come moments when it cuts its fingers with its own scissors; but censors are a race of polypii,—their fingers merely grow again. The censor had, then, stopped MM. Scribe and d'Épagny's drama. The vessel which bore their twofold banner, upon which the Minister of the Interior had put his embargo by the medium of his custom officers, was at anchor in the docks of the rue de Grenelle. The Revolution of 1830 set it afloat again.

We have said that Harel received the work in 1829. Becoming possessed of his own work again by the events of the revolution of July, Scribe thought no more of Harel and took his play to the Théâtre-Français. But Scribe, who usually reckoned carefully, had this time reckoned without Harel. Harel had far too good a memory to forget Scribe. He pursued author and play, writ in hand and a sheriff's officer behind him. It need hardly be said that the officer stopped both the play and the author just when they were turning the corner of the rue de Richelieu. Sheriff's officers are very fast runners! A law-suit ensued, and Harel lost. But the trial inspired Scribe's imagination; in that twofold insistence of the Théâtre-Français and the Théâtre-Odéon he saw a means of killing two birds with one stone and of making one play into two. In this way M. Scribe would have his drama, M. d'Épagny his drama; the Théâtre-Français its drama, and the Odéon its drama. The play, consequently, was reduplicated like a photograph: the Théâtre-Français, which was down on its luck, came in for the *Clerc et le Théologien* by M. d'Épagny; Harel drew Scribe aside by his coat-

tails just as the *Clerc de la Basoche* and he were entering, *à reculons*, on the second French stage. It is to be understood that I use this rather ambitious locution, the *seconde scène française*, to avoid putting *Odéon* so close to *reculons*. Both the dramas were failures, or pretty nearly so. I did not see either of them, and I shall therefore take good care to refrain from expressing my opinion upon them.

But our true fête days—I hope I may be forgiven for this harmless digression—were when it was the turn of one of the gentlemen from the Institute—Lemercier, Viennet or Arnault—to produce a work. Then there was general hilarity. We would all arrange to meet in the orchestra of the Théâtre-Français to be present at the spectacle of a work falling flat, sometimes with very little assistance, at others gently aided in its fall by a bitter blast of hisses; a spectacle sad enough for the author's friends, but very exhilarating to his enemies, and the gentlemen above mentioned had treated us as enemies.

M. Arnault was the cleverest of the three authors I have just named, a man, as I have said elsewhere, of immense worth and eminent intellect. But everyone has his own hobby-horse, as Tristram Shandy says, and M. Arnault's hobby-horse was tragedy. But his hobby was roaring, broken-winded, foundered, to such an extent that, in spite of its legs being fired by the *Constitutionnel*, it could rarely get to the last line of a fifth act!

We asked that these gentlemen's pieces should be played with as much fervour as they employed in stating that ours should not. They, on their side, clamoured loudly to be played, and, as they had the government to back them up, specially since the July Revolution, their turn to be represented arrived, in spite of the timid opposition of the Théâtre-Français, in spite, too, of sighs from members of the staff and the groans of the cashier. True, the torture did not last long; it was generally restricted to the three customary performances, even if it attained to three. Often the first performance was not ended; witness *Pertinax* and *Arbogaste*. It was very strange, in this case, to see the excuses which these gentlemen made up for their failure. Those made by M. Arnault were

delightful, since nobody could possibly have a readier wit than he. For instance, he had made the Théâtre-Français take up again an old piece of his, played, I believe, under the Empire the *Proscrit*, or *les Guelfes et les Gibelins*. The piece fell flat. Who did the furious Academician blame for it?—Firmin! Why Firmin? Firmin, delightful, enthusiastic and conscientious player, who enjoyed much lasting favour from the public, although his memory began to fail him,—Firmin played the part of Tébaldo, head of the Ghibellines and brother of Uberti, head of the Guelfs, in the play. The other parts were played by Ligier, Joanny and Duchesnois. So, we see, M. Arnault had nothing to grumble at: the Comédie-Française had lent him of its best; perhaps it had a conviction it would not be for long. Very well, M. Arnault made Firmin's memory, or, rather, want of memory, the excuse for this failure, and he dedicated his play to the prompter. We have this curious dedication before us, and are going to quote it; it will, we hope, have for our readers at least the attraction of a hitherto unpublished fragment. This time we are not afraid of being mistaken in the name of the author *du factum* as not long since happened to us concerning an article in the *Constitutionnel* reproduced by us, which, by a copyist's error, we ascribed to M. Étienne, whilst it was only by M. Jay.[1]

And, by the way, as a relation of M. Étienne, a son-in-law or rather, I think, it was a nephew,—protested in the papers, let me be allowed a word of explanation, which will completely re-establish my good faith. I live part of my life in Brussels, part in Paris; the rest of the time I live in the railway between Brussels and Paris, or Paris and Brussels. Besides, I have already said that I am writing my Memoirs without notes. The consequence is that, when I am in Paris, I have my information close at hand; but when I am in Brussels I am obliged to have it sent from Paris. Now, I needed the article that had been published against *Antony* the very morning of the day it was to have been played at the Théâtre-Français. I wrote to Viellot, my secretary—a delightful fellow who never

[1] See p. 277 and footnote.

thought of spreading the report that he was my collaborator,—to unearth the *Constitutionnel* from the catacombs of 1834, to copy out for me the above-mentioned article and to send it me. Viellot went to the Bibliothèque, that great common grave where journals of all sorts of parties and colours and times are entered. He borrowed the file from the rag-merchant of Pyat who was taking it away, and who, when he learnt what was wanted, would not let it off his hook for love or money until he was told that it was in order to do me a service; then he lent it, and Viellot picked off from its curved point the *Constitutionnel* for 28 April 1834. Then he returned home and copied out the article. Only, in copying it I do not know what hallucination he was possessed with, whether the style flew to his head, or the wit got into his brain, or the form upset his senses, anyhow, he imagined that the article was by M. Étienne, and signed it with the name of the author of *Brueys et Palaprat* and of the *Deux Gendres*. I, seeing the copy of the article, believed,—I was at a distance of seventy leagues from the scene of action, as they say poetically in politics,—the signature to be as authentic as the rest; I therefore fell upon the unfortunate article, and rent it in pieces—I was going to say tooth and nail, but no, I am too cautious for that!—with might and main, both article and signature. My error, though involuntary, was none the less an error on that account, and deserved that I should acknowledge it publicly. Thereupon, reparation be made to M. Étienne, and homage paid to M. Jay! Honour to whom honour is due!

Let us return to M. Arnault and his dedication, which, I remember, at the time made my poor Firmin so unhappy that he wept over it like a child!

"Dedicatory Epistle
To the Prompter of the Théâtre-Français[1]

"Monsieur,—Authors are by no means all ungrateful beings. I know some who have paid homage for their success

[1] Three persons are honoured with this title; they differ, however, in importance, not by reason of the relative importance of their duties, which

to the player to whom they were particularly indebted. I imitate this noble example: I dedicate the *Guelfes* to you. Mademoiselle Duchesnois, M. Joanny, M. Ligier have, without doubt, contributed to the success of that work by a zeal as great as their talent; but whatever they may have done for me, have they done as much as you, monsieur?

"'*To prompt is not to play*,' M. Firmin will say, who is even stronger at the game of draughts than at the game of acting.[1] To that I reply with Sganarelle: 'Yes and no!' When the prompter merely gives the word to the actor, when he only jogs the memory of the player, no, certainly, *to prompt is not to play!* But when the player takes everything from the prompter, everything from the first to the last line of his part; when your voice covers his; when it is yours alone which is heard whilst he gesticulates, certainly this is *playing through the prompter!* Is it not this, monsieur, which has happened, not only at the first, but even at every performance of the *Guelfes?* Is it not you who really played M. Firmin's part?

"'His memory,' he says, 'is of the worst.' It is conceivable, according to the system which places the seat of memory in the head.[2] But, under the circumstances, does not M. Firmin

are always the same, but according to that of the kind of work to which their talents are applied. Given the case of a work of a special nature, a romantic work like *Louis IX.* or *Émilia*, the prompter-in-chief takes the manuscript, and not a trace of that noble prose reaches the ears of the players before it has passed through his lips; but if it is a question of a classical work, a work in verse, standing then on his dignity, like the executioner who would only execute gentle folk, he says: you can carry through this bit of business, you fellows, passing the plebeian copy-book to his substitutes. When it is a question of high comedy he delegates his duties to the second prompter, and tragedy is given over to a third, that is to say to the industrious and modest man to whom this letter is dedicated.

[1] The game of draughts (*les dames*)—it is the game that is meant—is in fact this actor's ruling passion, although he is not a first-rate player. He knows, however, how to reconcile that passion with his duties, and is scarcely less eager to quit his game in order to go upon the stage when it is a public performance that is in question, than to quit the stage to resume his game; when merely authors are concerned, it is true, he does not exercise so much alacrity; but as it is only a matter of rehearsals, does he not always arrive quite soon enough . . . when he does come?

[2] The seat of memory varies according to the individual. It lay in the stomach of that comedian to whom Voltaire sent his *Variantes* in a pâté.

blame his memory for the infirmity of his will? And why, you will say to me, is M. Firmin wanting in kindly feeling towards you, who feel kindly disposed to everybody? Towards you, who, from your age, perhaps also from your misfortunes, if not on account of past successes, had a right at least to that consideration which is not refused to the scholar who makes his first appearance? Such are indeed the rights which I knew M. Firmin's good nature would accord you, rights which I thought to strengthen in him by offering one of the most important parts in my tragedy, the part that you have prompted, or that you have played: it is a case of six of one and a half-dozen of another. I was, indeed, far from suspecting that the honour done to M. Firmin's talent was an insult to his expectations. Yet that is what has happened.

"The succession to Talma was open for competition. When the empire of the world came to be vacant, all who laid claim to the empire of Alexander were not heroes: I ought to have remembered this; but does one always profit by the lessons of history? I did not imagine that the heir to the dramatic Alexander would be the one among his survivors who least resembled him. Nature had shown great prodigality towards Talma. His physical gifts corresponded with his moral endowments, a glowing soul dwelt in his graceful body; a vast intellect animated that noble head; his powerful voice, with its pathetic and solemn intonation, served as the medium for his inexhaustible sensitiveness, for his indefatigable energy. Talma possesses everything nature could bestow; besides all that art could acquire. Although M. Firmin has eminent gifts, does he combine in himself all perfections? His somewhat slender personal appearance does not ill-become all youthful parts, but does it accord with the dignity required by parts of leading importance? His voice is not devoid of charm in the expression of sentiments of affection; but has it the strength requisite for serious moods and violent emotions? His intellect is not wanting in breadth; but do his methods of execution expand to that breadth when he wants to exceed the limits with which nature has circumscribed him? The pride of the eagle may be found in the heart of a pigeon, and the courage of a lion in that of a poodle. But, by whatever sentiment it is animated, the rock-pigeon can only coo, the cur can but howl. Now, these accents have

Mademoiselle Contat placed it in her heart, and her memory was an excellent one."

not at all the same authority as the cry of the king of the air, or the roar of the king of the forests.

"After these sage reflections, distributing the part of my tragedy to the actors who have abilities that are the most in keeping with the characters of those parts, I gave that of Uberti to M. Ligier, an actor gifted with an imposing figure and voice, and I reserved the part of the tender impassioned Tébaldo for M. Firmin. What the deuce possessed me? Just as every Englishman says whenever he comes across salt water, '*This belongs to us!*' so does M. Firmin say whenever he comes across a part made for the physiognomy of Talma, *This belongs to me!*[1] The part of Uberti was intended for Talma, and I did not offer it to M. Firmin! The part of Uberti was claimed by M. Firmin, and I did not take it from M. Ligier! A twofold crime of *lèse-majesté*. Alas! How the majesty of M. Firmin has punished me for it! He accepted the rôle that I offered him. Knowing the secrets of the Comédie, you know, monsieur, what has been the result of that act of complacency. Put into study in April, *Les Guelfes* might have been produced in May, under the propitious influence of spring; it was only performed in July, during the heat of the dog-days. Thus had M. Firmin decided. Oh! the power of the force of inertia! When several ships sail in company, the common pace is regulated by that of the poorest sailer. The common pace in this case was regulated by the memory of M. Firmin, which unfortunately was regulated by his good will. Now, this good will thought fit to compromise the interests of my reputation. But everything has to be paid for. At what point, monsieur, did it not serve the interests of your fame? All the newspapers kept faithful to it. Did it not exhume you from the pit, where hitherto you had buried your capacities, and reveal them to the public? Did it not, when raising you to the level of the actors behind whom you had hitherto been hidden, give them a mouthpiece in you?

"Declaiming, whilst M. Firmin gesticulated, you have, it is true, transferred from the boulevards to the Théâtre-Français an imitation of that singular combination of a declamatory orator who does not let himself be seen, and a gesticulator

[1] In consequence of this right, M. Firmin is preparing to play Hamlet. He has even bought for it, they tell me, the dress Talma wore in that part. Fancy his dreaming of such a thing. That costume was not made for his figure, and besides, all who wear lions' skins are not always taken for lions.

who does not let himself be heard, co-operate in the execution of the same part. People of scrupulous taste are, it is true, offended by it; but what matters that to you? It is not you, monsieur, who, in these scenes, play the buffoon: and what does it matter to me, since, acting thus, you have saved my play? Moreover, is it the first borrowing, and the least honourable borrowing, that your noble theatre has made from those of the boulevards?[1]

"Thanks to that admirable agreement, the *Guelfes* has had several representations. But why has not the run, suspended by a journey taken by Mademoiselle Duchesnois, been resumed upon her return, as that great actress requested it should be, and as the play-bills announced.[2]

"M. Firmin refused to proceed. The part of Tébaldo, he says, has slipped out of his memory. For that matter, it might as well never have entered it. But, after all, what is it to you or to me whether he knows his part or not? Can he not make the same shift in the future as he has in the past? Need his memory fail him so long as you do not fail him? Is his memory not at the tip of your tongue, which, one knows, is by no means paralysed? But do not these difficulties, monsieur, that are said to come from M. Firmin, come from yourself? Accustomed to working underground, was it not you who stirred them up in secret? You have not the entire part, like M. Firmin; paid for prompting when you take the part of an actor, and of a principal actor, did you not get tired, at the last, of becoming out of breath for glory alone, and did you not behind the scenes oppose the revival of a play during the performance of which

[1] *Louis XI.* and *Émilia*, whose merits we fully appreciate, seem indeed to have been borrowed, if not actually robbed, from the theatres of the boulevards. If, during the performance of these pieces, the orchestra perchance woke out of its lethargy, whether to announce by a fanfare of trumpets the entrance or departure of exalted personages, whether to explain by a short symphony what speech had failed to make clear, and even when one was in the precincts consecrated to Racine, Corneille and Voltaire, one was willing enough to fancy oneself at the Ambigu-Comique or at the Gaieté: it needed nothing more than this to complete the illusion. Let us hope that the regenerators of this theatre will take kindly to the remark, and will profit by it for the perfecting of the French stage.

[2] For the last six months, and even to-day, the bill announces: "Until the performance of *Les Guelfes et Les Gibelins*"; probably to-morrow it will no longer contain the announcement.

you had not time to breathe? Justice, monsieur, justice! No doubt M. Firmin owes you an indemnity: claim it, but do not compromise the interests of the Théâtre-Français by impeding his services in preventing him from doing justice to an author's rights; that may lead to consequences, remember: the number of authors dissatisfied with him on just grounds is already but too great; be careful not to increase it. The second Théâtre-Français, although people are doing their best to kill it, is not yet dead. Would it be impossible to put it on its feet again? Will not the players who have been drawn off to block the first theatre (which pays them less for playing at it than for not playing any part at all) grow tired in the end of a state of things which reduces them from the status of parish priests to that of curates, or, rather, from being the bishops they were degrades them to the rank of millers? In conclusion, is there not a nucleus of a tragedy-playing company still left at the Odéon? And are there no pupils at the school of oratory who could swell the number?

"Think of it, monsieur, the tragedy which they seem to wish to stifle in the rue de Richelieu might find a home in the faubourg Saint-Germain, which was its cradle and that also of the Théâtre-Français. You would not do badly to drop a hint of this to the members of the committee. Further, happen what may, remember, monsieur, the obligations that I owe you will never be erased from my memory, which is not as ungrateful as that of M. Firmin.

"If only I could express my gratitude to you by some homage more worthy your acceptance!—Dedicate a tragedy to you, a tragedy in verse, written at top speed![1] But each must pay in his own coin: monsieur, do not refuse to take mine.

[1] It is especially against tragedies in verse that the umpires of good taste to-day protest. Their repugnance in respect of poetry ever outweighs their love for romanticism. If, in that series of chapters—entitled scenes—whose whole forms a novel called a drama, which is sold under the title of *Louis XI.*; if, in *Louis XI.*, the Scottish prose of Sir Walter Scott had been put into rhymed verse; that drama would not have been more kindly received by them than a posthumous tragedy of Racine, although common sense would be scarcely more respected there than in a melodrama. It is to the absence of rhyme also that *Émilia* owes the favour with which these gentlemen have honoured it. When he had heard the reading of that work, one of the most influential members of the tribunal by which it had been judged, exclaimed: "*The problem is solved! The problem is solved!*

"Remember, monsieur, that Benedict XIV. did not scorn the dedication of *Mahomet*. I am not a Voltaire, I know; but neither are you a Pope. All things considered, perhaps the relation between us is equivalent to that which existed between those two personages. Meanwhile, take this until something better turns up. Classic by principle and by habit I have not hitherto believed myself possessed of sufficient genius to dispense with both rhyme and reason. But who knows? Perhaps, some day, I shall be in a condition to try my hand at the romantic *guerre*: if I put myself at a distance from the age when people rave extravagantly I shall draw nearer to that of dotage. Patience then!—I am, with all the consideration which is due to you, monsieur, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"ARNAULT"

We have at last a tragedy in prose!" The Comédiens Français formerly gave a hundred louis to Thomas Corneille for putting a comedy of Molière's, *Le Festin de Pierre*, into verse. The Comédiens Français will, it is said, to-day give a thousand louis to an academician for putting the tragedies of Corneille, Racine and of Voltaire into prose. Is it indeed necessary that they should address themselves to an academician for that? Do not a good many of them perform that parody every day of their lives?

Verse and rhyme are not natural, say lovers of nature. Clothes, gentlemen, are not natural, and yet you wear them to distinguish yourself from the savage; furthermore, you wear clothes of fine materials to distinguish yourselves from the rabble, and, when you are rich enough to enable you to do so, you adorn them with trimmings to distinguish yourself even from well-to-do people. That which one does for the body permit us to do for the intellect; allow us to do for the mind that which you do for matter.

CHAPTER V

M. Arnault's *Pertinax—Pizarre*, by M. Fulchiron—M. Fulchiron as a politician—M. Fulchiron as magic poet—A word about M. Viennet—My opposite neighbour at the performance of *Pertinax*—Splendid failure of the play—Quarrel with my *vis-à-vis*—The newspapers take it up—My reply in the *Journal de Paris*—Advice of M. Pillet

ALAS! there are two things for which I have searched in vain! And verily, God knows, how thoroughly I search when I begin! These are Firmin's answer to M. Arnault and the tragedy of *Pertinax*. Neither answer nor tragedy exist any longer. Why *Pertinax*? What is *Pertinax*? And what is the successor to Commodus doing here? Rather ask what the unfortunate being was doing at the Théâtre-Français! He fell there beneath the hissings of the pit, as he fell beneath the swords of the prætorians. Here is the history of his second death, his second fall. After a lapse of seventeen years I cannot say much about the first; but, after an interval of twenty-four years, I can relate the second, at which I was present.

After those unlucky *Guelfes* had obstinately remained on the bills for nine months they finally disappeared. M. Arnault demanded compensation for Firmin's defective memory. The committee decided that, although *Pertinax* had only been received eleven years ago, it should be put in rehearsal.

Eleven years ago? You repeat, and you think I am mistaken, do you not? But it is you who are mistaken. *Arbogaste*, by M. Viennet, received in 1825, was only played in 1841! *Pizarre*, by M. Fulchiron, received in 1803, has not yet been played! Let me put in a parenthesis in favour of poor *Pizarre* and the unfortunate M. Fulchiron.

M. Fulchiron, you know him well?—Yes. Well, then, he had had a tragedy, *Pizarre*, received at the Comédie-Française in the month of August 1803—Ah! really? And what has the Comédie-Française been doing the last fifty years?—It has not played M. Fulchiron's tragedy. And what did this same M. Fulchiron do during those fifty years?—He asked to have his piece played. Come! come! come!—What more could you expect? Hope supported him! They had promised it, when they accepted it, that it would have its turn.

Those are the actual words! Look at the registers of the Comédie-Française if you don't believe me. True, the police of the Consulate suspended the work; but the censorship of the Empire was better informed as to the tragedy and returned it to its author.

Hence it arose that, contrary to the opinion of many people who preferred the First Consul to the Emperor, M. Fulchiron preferred the Emperor to the First Consul.

During the whole of the Empire,—that is to say, from 1805 to 1814—during the whole of the Restoration—that is to say, from 1815 to 1830—M. Fulchiron wrote, begged, prayed with, it must be admitted, that gentleness which is indissolubly bound up with his real character. In 1830, M. Fulchiron became a politician. Then he had an excuse to offer. To his friends—M. Fulchiron actually took those people for his friends! think of it!—who asked him—

"Why, then, dear Monsieur Fulchiron, did you not get your *Pizarre* played when so many good things had been said about it for a long time?"

He replied—"Because I am a politician, and one cannot be both a politician and a man of letters at the same time."

"Bah! look at M. Guizot, M. Villemain, M. Thiers!"

"M. Guizot, M. Villemain and M. Thiers have their own ideas on the subject; I have mine."

"Oh! influence in high quarters, then!"

M. Fulchiron blushed and smiled; then, with that air which M. Viennet puts on, when talking of Louis-Philippe, he said, *Mon illustre ami*—

"Well, yes," replied M. Fulchiron, "the king took hold of the button of my coat, which is a habit of his, as you know."

"No, I did not know."

"Ah! that is because you are not one of the frequenters of the château."

"There are people who lay great stress on being intimates of a chateau! You understand?"

"When he took me by my coat button," continued M. Fulchiron, "the king said to me, 'My dear Fulchiron, in spite of the beauties it contains, do not have your tragedy played.' 'But why not?' 'How can one make a man a minister who has written a tragedy?' 'Sire, the Emperor Napoleon said, "If Corneille had lived in my day, I should have made him a prince!"' 'I am not the Emperor Napoleon, and you are not Corneille.' 'Nevertheless, sire, when one has had a tragedy calling from the deeps for the last thirty years . . .' 'You shall read it to me, M. Fulchiron . . .' 'Ah! sire, your Majesty's desires are commands. When would your Majesty like me to read *Pizarre*?' 'Some day . . . when all these devils of Republicans leave me a bit of respite!'"

The Republicans never left Louis-Philippe, who, you will agree, was an intelligent man, any respite. That is why M. Fulchiron hated Republicans so much. What! was that the reason? Yes! You thought that M. Fulchiron hated Republicans because they tended to usurp power, to disturb order, to put, as Danton expressed it in his curt description of the Republic, *à mettre dessus ce qui est dessous*? You are mistaken; M. Fulchiron hated Republicans because by means of all their riots—their 5 June, 14 April, etc. etc. etc.—upon my word, I forget all the dates!—they prevented him from reading his play to Louis-Philippe. So, on 24 February 1848, however devoted he seemed to be to the established government, M. Fulchiron allowed Louis-Philippe to fall.

See on what slender threads hang great events! If Louis-Philippe had heard the reading of *Pizarre*, M. Fulchiron would have supported the Government of July, and perhaps Louis-Philippe might still be on the throne. So, after the fall of

Louis-Philippe, M. Fulchiron was as happy as the Prince of Monaco when they took away his principality from him.

"My political career is a failure," says M. Fulchiron, "and you see me once more a literary man! I shall not be a minister, but I will be an academician."

"Indeed!" say you; "then why is not M. Fulchiron an academician?"

"Because *Pizarre* has not been played."

"Good! Was not M. Dupaty received into the Academy on condition that his tragedy *Isabelle* should not be played?"

"Oh! really?"

"They were already sufficiently troubled by the fact that his *Seçonde Botanique* had been played! That youthful indiscretion delayed his entry for ten years . . . But ten years are not fifty."

So M. Fulchiron began to be impatient, as impatient, that is, as he can be. From time to time he appears at the Théatre-Français, and, with that smile which, it seems to me, should prevent anyone from refusing him anything, he says—

"About my *Pizarre*, it must be high time they were putting it in hand!"

"Monsieur," says Verteuil to him—the secretary of the Comédie-Française, a clever fellow, whom we have already had occasion to mention, through whose hands many plays pass, but who does not compose any himself—"Monsieur, they are even now busy with it."

"Ah! very good!"

And M. Fulchiron's smile becomes still more winning.

"Yes, and as soon as M. Viennet's *Achille*, now under rehearsal, has been played, *Pizarre* will occupy the stage."

"But, if I remember rightly, M. Viennet's *Achille* was only accepted in 1809, and, consequently, I have the priority."

"Doubtless; but M. Viennet had two *tours de faveur* and you only one."

"Then I was wrong to complain."

And M. Fulchiron goes away always smiling, takes his visiting-card in person to M. Viennet, and writes in pencil on it

these few words, "Dear colleague, hasten your rehearsals of *Achille*!"

Thus he leaves his card with M. Viennet's porter, the same porter who informed the said M. Viennet that he was a peer of France; and M. Viennet, who is horribly spiteful, has not bowed to M. Fulchiron since the second card. He treats the seven pencilled words of M. Fulchiron as an epigram and says to everybody—

"Fulchiron may, perhaps, be a Martial, but I swear he is not an Æschylus!"

And M. Fulchiron, his arms hung down, continues to walk abroad and through life, as Hamlet says, never doubting that if he is no Æschylus it is all owing to M. Viennet.[1]

I will close my parenthesis about M. Fulchiron, and return to M. Arnault and *Pertinax*, which the ungrateful prompter, in spite of the dedicatory epistle to the *Guelfes*, has never called anything but *Père Tignace* (Daddy Tignace).

Pertinax, then, was played as some compensation for the disappearance of the *Guelfes*. Oh! what a pity it is that *Pertinax* has not been printed! How I would like to have given you specimens of it and then you would understand the merriment of the pit! All I recollect is, that at the decisive moment the Emperor Commodus called for his secretary. I had in front of me a tall man whose broad shoulders and thick locks hid the actor from me every time he happened to be in the line of sight. Unluckily, I did not possess the scissors of Sainte-Foix. By his frantic applause I gathered that this gentleman understood many things which I did not. The upshot of it was that, when the Emperor Commodus called his secretary, the play upon words seemed to me to require an explanation, and I leant over towards the gentleman in front, and, with all the politeness I could command, I said to him—

"Pardon me, monsieur, but it seems to me that this is a *pièce à tiroirs!*" (Comedy made up of unconnected episodes.)

He jumped up in his stall, uttered a sort of roar but controlled himself. True, the curtain was on the point of falling,

[1] See note at end of chapter.

and before it had actually fallen our enthusiast was shouting with all his might—"Author!"

Unfortunately, everybody was by no means as eager to know the author as was my neighbour in front. Something like three-quarters of the house—and, perhaps, among these were M. Arnault's own friends—did not at all wish him to be named. Placed in the orchestra between M. de Jouy and Victor Hugo, feeling, on my left, the elbows of Romanticism and, on my right, those of *Classicism*, if I may be allowed to coin a word, I waited patiently and courageously until they stopped hissing, just as M. Arnault had acted towards me in turning the cold shoulder towards me after *Henri III.*, leaving me the privilege of neutrality.

But man proposes and God disposes. God, or rather the devil, inspired the neighbour to whom I had perhaps put an indiscreet, although very innocent question, to point me out to his friends, and, consequently, to M. Arnault, as the Æolus at whose signal all the winds had been let loose which blew from the four cardinal points of the theatre in such different ways. A quarrel ensued between me and the tall man, a quarrel which instantly made a diversion in the strife that was going on. Next day all the journals gave an account of this quarrel, with their usual impartiality, generosity and accuracy towards me. It was imperative that I should reply. I chose the *Journal de Paris* in which to publish my reply; it was edited, at that period, by the father of Léon Pillet, a friend of mine. Therefore, the following day, the *Journal de Paris* published my letter, preceded and followed by a few bitter and sweet lines. This is the exordium. After my letter will come the peroration.

"In reporting the failure which the tragedy of *Pertinax* met with at the hands of the critics, we mentioned that a dispute took place in the centre of the orchestra. M. Alexandre Dumas, one of the actors in this little drama, which was more exciting than the one that had preceded it, has addressed a letter to us on this subject. We hasten to publish it without wishing to constitute ourselves judges of the accompanying

accusations which the author of *Henri III.* brings against the newspapers.

"'*Friday*, 29 *May* 1829

"'In spite of the fixed resolution I had taken and have adhered to until to-day, of never replying to what the papers say of me, I think it my duty to ask you to insert this letter in your next issue. It is a reply to the short article which forms the complement of the account in your issue of yesterday, in which you give an account of *Pertinax*. Your article is couched in these terms—

"'"*As we were leaving the house, a lively contest arose in the orchestra, between an old white-haired man and a very youthful author, in other words, doubtless, between a 'classic' and a 'romantic.' Let us hope that that altercation will not lead to unpleasant consequences.*"

"'It is I, monsieur, who have the misfortune to be the *very youthful author*, to whom it is of great importance, from the very fact of his being young and an author, that he should lay down the facts exactly as they happened. I was in the orchestra of the Français, between M. de Jouy and M. Victor Hugo, during the whole of the performance of *Pertinax*. Obliged, in a manner, as a student of art and as a student of all that which makes masters to listen, I had listened attentively and in silence to the five acts which had just concluded, when, in the middle of the lively dispute that was going on between some spectators who wished M. Arnault to be called and others who did not, I was impudently apostrophised, whilst sitting quite silent, by a friend of M. Arnault, who stood up and pointed at me with his finger. I will repeat what he said word for word—

"'"*It is not surprising that they are hissing in the orchestra when M. Dumas is there. Are you not ashamed, monsieur, to make yourself the ringleader of a cabal?*"

"'And when I replied that I had not said one word, he added—

"'"*That does not matter, it is you who direct the whole league!*"

"'As some persons may believe this stupid accusation I have appealed to the testimony of MM. de Jouy and Victor Hugo. This testimony is, as it was inevitable that it would be, unanimous.

"'That is enough, I think, to exonerate myself. But,

whilst I have the pen in my hand, monsieur, as it is probably the first and, perhaps, the last time that I write to a newspaper,[1] I desire to add a few words relative to the absurd attacks my drama of *Henri III.* has brought down on me; such a favourable occasion as this one may, perhaps, never present itself again: allow me, therefore, to take advantage of it.

"'I think I understand, and I honestly believe that I accept, true literary criticism as well as anyone. But, seriously, monsieur, are the facts I have just quoted really literary criticism?

"'The day after the reception of my drama *Henri III.* at the Comédie-Française, the *Courrier des Théâtres*, which did not know the work, denounced it to the censorship, in the hope, so it was said, that the censor would not suffer the scandal of such a performance. That seems to me rather a matter for the police than for literature. Is it not so, monsieur? I will not speak of a petition which was presented to the king during my rehearsals pleading that the Théâtre-Français should return to the road of the *really beautiful*.[2]

"'It is stated that the august personage to whom it was addressed replied simply, "*What can I do in a question of this nature? I only have a place in the pit, like all other Frenchmen.*" I have not really the courage to be angered against the signatories of a denunciation which has brought us such a reply. Besides, several of us would have blushed, since, for what they had done, and have said that they thought they were signing quite a different thing. Then came the day of the representation. It will be granted that, on that day alone, the newspapers had the right to speak of the work. They made great use of their privileges; but several of them, as they themselves confessed, were not choice in their style of criticism. The *Constitutionnel* and the *Corsaire* said much kinder things the first day than the play deserved. A week later, the *Constitutionnel* compared the play with the *Pie Voleuse*, and accused the author of having

[1] Like Buonaparte on 15 Vendémiaire, I was far from being able to see clearly into my future.

[2] I have forgotten to inscribe M. de Laville, author of *Folliculaire* and of *Une Journée d'Élections*, among the number of the signers of that petition, which I have cited in another part of these Memoirs. One of these signatories, who survives the others, has pointed out my error to me and I here repair it.

danced a round dance in the green room of the Comédie-Française with some wild fanatics, about the bust of Racine—which stands with its back against the wall—shouting, "*Racine is done for*!" This was merely ridicule, and people shrugged their shoulders. The next day, the *Corsaire* said that the work was a monstrosity, and that the author was a Jesuit and a pensioner. This, it must be admitted, was an excellent joke, addressed to the son of a Republican general whose mother never received the pension which, it seems, was due to her, whether from the government of the Empire or from the king's government. This was more than ridicule, it was contemptible. As for the *Gazette de France*, I will do it the justice of saying that it has not varied for an instant from the opinion that M. de Martainville expressed in it on the first day. This journal made out that there was a flagrant conspiracy in the play against the throne and the altar; while the journalist expressed the liveliest regret that he had not seen the author appear when he was called for. "People declare," he said, "that *his face has a typically romantic air about it*." Now, as Romanticism is M. de Martainville's *bête noire*, I can believe, without being too punctilious, that he had no intention of paying me a compliment. It is not merely impolite on M. de Martainville's part, but, worse still, it is indelicate: M. de Martainville is very well aware that one can make one's reputation but that one cannot make one's own physiognomy. His own physiognomy is extremely respectable. I could go on explaining the causes of these alterations and insults, and make known various sufficiently curious anecdotes concerning certain individuals; still more could I . . . But the twelve columns of your newspaper would not suffice. I will therefore conclude my letter, monsieur, by asking advice of you, since you have great experience. What ought an author to do in order to spare himself the quarrels arising out of first performances? I have had three of this nature during the last three months;—three quarrels, that is to say: had it been three representations I should not have survived!

"'One concerning *Isabelle de Bavière*, with an admirer of M. de Lamothe-Langon, who made out that I had hissed. One at the *Élections*, with an enemy of M. de Laville, who contended that I had applauded. Lastly, one at *Pertinax* with a friend of M. Arnault, because I neither clapped nor

hissed. I await your kind advice, monsieur, and I give you my word that I will follow it, if it be anyway possible for me to do so.—I have the honour, etc.'"

After the last line of the above, the *Journal de Paris* attempted a sort of reply—

"As to the advice which M. Alexandre Dumas is kind enough to ask us to give because of our experience concerning the line of conduct he should take to avoid disputes at first-night performances, we will reply to him that a young author, happy in the enjoyment of a real success, and who knows how to conceal his joyous pride beneath suitable modesty; a *student of art* who, like M. Dumas, gives himself up to the study of *the works of masters*, including, therein, the author of *Pertinax*,—does not need to fear insulting provocations. If, in spite of these dispositions, natural, no doubt, to the character of M. Dumas, people persist on picking these Teuton or classic quarrels with him, I should advise him to treat them with contempt, the quarrels, I mean, not the Teutons or the classics. Or, indeed, there is another expedient left him: namely, to abstain from going to first performances."

The advice, it will be admitted, was difficult, if not impossible, to follow. I was too young, and my heart was too near my head, I had, as is vulgarly said, "la tête trop près du bonnet" *i.e.* I was too hot-headed, to treat quarrels with contempt, whether with Teutons or classics, and I was too inquisitive not to attend first nights regularly. I have since been cured of this latter disease; but it has been for want of time. And yet, it is not so much lack of time which has cured me; it is the first performances themselves.

NOTE

I HAVE an apology to make concerning M. Fulchiron. It seems I was in error, not about the date of the reception of *Pizarre*; not upon the turn of favour which led to the performance of that piece in 1803; not,

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—Littré defines *un tour de faveur* as the decision of a theatrical committee or manager by virtue of which a piece is given precedence over others received earlier.]

finally, upon the darkness of the spaces of Limbo in which it balanced with eyes half shut, between death and life—but about the cause which prevented it from being played in 1803.

First of all, let me say that no one claimed again in respect of M. Fulchiron, not even he himself. If he had claimed again, my pleasantries would have pained him, and then, I confess, I should have been as sad as, and even sadder than, he, to have given occasion for a protest on the part of so honourable a man and, above all, so unexacting an author. This is what happened.

One day, recently, when entering the green room at the Théâtre-Français, where I was having a little comedy called *Romulus* rehearsed, which, in spite of its title, had nothing to do with the founder of Rome, I was accosted by Régnier, who plays the principal part in the work.

"Ah!" he said, "is that you? . . . I am delighted to see you!"

"And I to see you . . . Have you some good advice to give me about my play?"

I should tell you that, in theatrical matters, Régnier gives the wisest advice I know.

"Not about your play," he replied, "but about yourself."

"Oh come, my dear fellow! I would have shaken hands with you for advice about my play; but for personal advice, I will embrace you."

"You lay great stress on being impartial?"

"Why! You might as well ask me if I am keen on living."

"And when you have been unjust you are very anxious to repair your injustice?"

"Indeed I am!"

"Then, my dear friend, you have been unfair to M. Fulchiron: repair your injustice."

"What! Was his tragedy by chance received in 1804, instead of 1803, as I thought?"

"No."

"Will it be played without my knowing anything about it, as was M. Viennet's *Arbogaste*?"

"No, but M. Fulchiron has given his turn of favour to a young briefless barrister, who wrote a tragedy in his spare moments. M. Raynouard was the barrister; *Les Templiers* was the tragedy."

"Are you telling me the truth?"

"I am going to give you proof of it."

"How will you do that?"

"Come upstairs with me to the archives."

"Show me the way."

Régnier walked in front and I followed him as Dante's Barbariccia followed Scarmiglione, but without making so much noise as he.

Five minutes later, we were among the archives, and Régnier asked M. Laugier, the keeper of the records of the Théâtre-Français, for the file of autograph letters from M. Fulchiron. M. Laugier gave them to him. I was going to carry them off, and I stretched out my hand with that intention, when Régnier snatched them back from me as one snatches a bit of pie-crust from a clever dog who does not yet know how to count nine properly.

"Well?" I asked him.

"Wait."

He pressed the palm of his hand on M. Fulchiron's letters, which were encased in their yellow boards. Please note carefully that the epithet is not a reproach; I know people who, after fifty years of age, are yellow in a quite different sense from that of M. Fulchiron's letter-book backs.

"You must know, first of all, my dear friend," continued Régnier, "that formerly, particularly under the Empire, as soon as they produced a new tragedy the receipts decreased."

"I conjecture so; but I am very glad to know it officially."

"The result is that the committee of the Comédie-Française had great difficulty in deciding to play fresh pieces."

"I can imagine so——"

"A turn was therefore a precious possession."

"A thing which had no price!" as said Lagingeole.

"Very well, now read that letter of M. Fulchiron's."

I took the paper from Régnier's hands and read as follows—

"*To the Members of the Administrative Committee of the Comédie-Française*

"GENTLEMEN,—I have just learnt that the préfect has given his permission to the *Templiers*. Desiring to do full justice and to pay all respect to that work and to its author, which they deserve, I hasten to tell you that I give up my turn to the tragedy; but, at the same time, I ask that mine shall be taken up immediately after, so that the second tragedy which shall be played, reckoning from this present time, shall be *one of mine*; if you will have the kindness to give me an actual promise of this in writing, it will confirm my definite abandonment of my turn.—I remain, gentlemen, respectfully yours,

"FULCHIRON, fils"

"Ah! but," said I to Régnier, "allow me to point out to you that the sacrifice was not great and its value was much depreciated owing to the precautions taken by M. Fulchiron to get one of his tragedies played."

"Wait a bit, though," resumed Régnier. "The suggestion made by M. Fulchiron was rejected. They made him see that the injustice which he did not wish done to himself would oppress a third party.

If he renounced his turn it would have to be a complete renunciation, and, if M. Fulchiron fell out of rank, he must take his turn again at the end of the file. Now this was a serious matter. Suppose all the chances were favourable it would mean ten years at least! It must be confessed that M. Fulchiron took but little time to reflect, considering the gravity of the subject: then he said, "Well, gentlemen, I know the tragedy of the *Templiers*; it is much better that it should be performed at once; and that *Pizarre* should not have its turn for ten years. It was, thanks to this condescension, of which very few authors would be capable towards a colleague, that the tragedy of the *Templiers* was played; and, as one knows, that tragedy was one of the literary triumphs of the Empire. *Les Deux Gendres* and the *Tyran domestique* complete the dramatic triology of the period. Almost as much as eighteen hundred years ago they 'rendered to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's.' Why not render to M. Fulchiron the justice which is his due?"

"I am not the person to refuse this," I said to Régnier, "and I am delighted to have the opportunity to make M. Fulchiron a public apology! M. Fulchiron did better than write a good tragedy: he did a good deed; whilst I, by sneering at him, did a bad action—without even the excuse of having written a good tragedy!"

CHAPTER VI

Châteaubriand ceases to be a peer of France—He leaves the country—Béranger's song thereupon—Châteaubriand as versifier—First night of *Charles VII.*—Delafosse's vizor—Yaqoub and Frédérick-Lemaître—*The Reine d'Espagne*—M. Henri de Latouche—His works, talent and character—Interlude of *The Reine d'Espagne*—Preface of the play—Reports of the pit collected by the author

PEOPLE were very full at this time of the resignation and exile of Châteaubriand, both of which were voluntary acts. The previous government had caused his dismissal from the French peerage, by reason of its abolition of heredity in the peerage. The author of the *Martyrs* exiled himself because the uproar caused by his opposition became daily less evident and he feared that it would die away altogether.

"Do you know, madame, that Châteaubriand is growing deaf?" I said once to Madame O'Donnel, a witty woman, the sister and daughter of witty women.

"Indeed!" she replied, "then it is since people have stopped talking about him."

It must be confessed that a terrible conspiracy, that of silence, was on foot against Châteaubriand, who had not the strength to bear it. He hoped that the echo of his great reputation, which once upon a time had nearly as much weight in the world as Napoleon's, would spread abroad. The newspapers made a great stir about this voluntary exile. Béranger made it the subject of one of his short poems, and he, Voltairian and Liberal, addressed lines to the author of *Atala*, *Réné* and the *Martyrs*, a Catholic and Royalist. This

poem of Béranger's it will be remembered began with these four lines—

> "Châteaubriand, pourquoi fuir la patrie,
> Fuir notre amour, notre encens et nos soins?
> N'entends-tu pas la France qui s'écrie:
> 'Mon beau ciel pleure une étoile de moins!'"

Châteaubriand had the good taste to reply in prose. The best verses are very far below Béranger's worst. It was one of the obsessions of Châteaubriand's life that he made such bad verses and he persisted in making them. He shared this eccentricity with Nodier: these two geniuses of modern prose were haunted by the demon of rhyme. Happily people will forget *Moïse* and the *Contes en vers*, just as one has forgotten that Raphael played the violin. While Béranger sang, and Châteaubriand retired to Lucerne,—where eight or ten months later, I was to help him to *feed his chickens*,—the day for the first performance of *Charles VII.* arrived, 20 October.

I have already said what I thought of the merits of my play: as poetry, it was a great advance upon *Christine*; as a dramatic work it was an imitation of *Andromaque*, the *Cid* and the *Camargo*. Ample justice was done to it: it had a great success and did not bring in a sou! Let us here state, in passing, that when it was transferred to the Théâtre-Français, it was performed twenty or twenty-five times, and made a hundred louis at each performance. The same thing happened later with regard to the *Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr*. That comedy, represented in 1842 or 1843 with creditable but not every remunerative success—although it then had Firmin, Mesdemoiselles Plessy and Anaïs as its exponents—had, at its revival, six years later, twice the number of performances which it had had when it was a novelty, making an incredible amount of money during its odd Saint Martin's summer. But let us return to *Charles VII.* We have mentioned what success the work met with; a comic incident very nearly compromised it. Delafosse, one of the most conscientious comedians I ever knew, played the part of

Charles VII. As I have said, Harel did not want to go to any expense over the play (this time, indeed, he acted like a wise man); to such a degree that I had been obliged, as is known, to borrow a fifteenth-century suit of armour from the Artillery Museum; this cuirass was, on a receipt from me, taken to the property room at the Odéon; there, the theatrical armourer had occasion,—not to clean it, for it shone like silver,—but to oil the springs and joints in order to bring back the suppleness which they had lost during a state of rigidity that had endured for four centuries. By degrees, the obliging cuirass was, indeed, made pliable, and Delafosse, whose shell at the proper moment it was to become, was able, although in an iron sheath, to stretch out his legs and move his arms. The helmet alone declined all concessions; its vizor had probably not been raised since the coronation of Charles VII.; and, having seen such a solemnity as this it absolutely refused to be lowered. Delafosse, a conscientious man, as I have already indicated, looked with pain upon the obstinacy of his vizor, which, during the whole time of his long war-like speech did him good service by remaining raised, but which, when the speech was ended, and he was going off the stage, would give him when lowered a formidable appearance, upon which he set great store The armourer was called and, after many attempts, in which he used in turn both gentle and coercive measures, oil and lime, he got the wretched vizor to consent to be lowered. But, when this end was achieved, it was almost as difficult a task to raise it again as it had been to lower it. In lowering, it slipped over a spring, made in the head of a nail, which, after several attempts, found an opening, resumed its working, and fixed the vizor in such a way that neither sword nor lance-thrusts could raise it again; this spring had to be pressed with a squire's dagger before it could be pushed back again into its socket, and permit the vizor to be raised. Delafosse troubled little about this difficulty; he went out with lowered vizor and his squire had plenty of time to perform the operation in the green room. Had Henri II. but worn such a vizor he would not have died at the hand of

Montgomery! Behold on what things the fate of empires depend! I might even say the same about the fate of plays! Henri II. was killed because his vizor was raised. Charles VII. avoided this because his vizor remained lowered. In the heat of delivery, Delafosse made so violent a gesture that the vizor fell of itself, yielding, doubtless, to the emotion that it felt. This may have been its manner of applauding. Whatever the cause, Delafosse suddenly found himself completely prevented from continuing his discourse. The lines began in the clearest fashion imaginable; they were emphasised most plainly, but ended in a lugubrious and unintelligible bellowing. The audience naturally began to laugh. It is said that it is impossible for our closest friend to refrain from laughter when he sees us fall. It is no laughing matter, I can tell you, when a play fails, but my best friends began to laugh. Luckily, the squire of King Charles VII., or, rather, Delafosse's super (whichever you like), did not forget on the stage the part he played behind the scenes; he rushed forward, dagger in hand, on the unfortunate king; the public only saw in the accident that had just happened a trick of the stage and, in the action of the super, a fresh incident. The laughter ceased and the audience remained expectant. The result of the pause was that in a few seconds the vizor rose again, and showed Charles VII., as red as a peony and very nearly stifled. The play concluded without any other accident. Frédérick-Lemaître was angry with me for a long time because I did not give him the part of Yaqoub; but he was certainly mistaken about the character of that personage, whom he took for an Othello. The sole resemblance between Othello and Yaqoub lies in the colour of the face; the colour of the soul, if one may be allowed to say so, is wholly different. I should have made Othello—and I should have been very proud of it if I had!—jealous, violent, carried away by his passions, a man of initiative and of will-power, leader of the Venetian galleys; an Othello with flattened nose, thick lips, prominent cheek-bones, frizzy hair; an Othello, more negro than Arab, should I have given to Frédérick. But my Othello, or, rather, my Yaqoub

was more Arab than negro, a child of the desert, swarthy complexioned rather than black, with straight nose, thin lips, and smooth and flat hair; a sort of lion, taken from his mother's breast and carried off from the red and burning sands of the Sahara to the cold and damp flagstones of a château in the West; in the darkness and cold he becomes enervated, languid, poetical. It was the fine, aristocratic and rather sickly nature of Lockroy which really suited the part. And, according to my thinking, Lockroy played it admirably. The day after the first performance of *Charles VII.* I received a good number of letters of congratulation. The play had just enough secondary merit not to frighten anybody, and brought me the compliments of people who, whether unable or unwilling to pay them any longer to Ancelot, felt absolutely obliged to pay them to somebody.

Meanwhile, the Théâtre-Français was preparing a play which was to cause a much greater flutter than my poor *Charles VII.* This was the *Reine d'Espagne*, by Henri de Latouche. M. de Latouche,—to whom we shall soon have to devote our attention in connection with the appearance upon our literary horizon of Madame Sand,—was a sort of hermit, who lived at the Vallée-aux-Loups. The name of the hermitage quite sufficiently describes the hermit. M. de Latouche was a man of genuine talent; he has published a translation of Hoffmann's *Cardillac*, and a very remarkable Neapolitan novel. The translation—M. de Latouche obliterated the name on his stolen linen—was called *Olivier Brusson*; the Neapolitan novel was called *Fragoletta*. The novel is an obscure work, badly put together, but certain parts of it are dazzling in their colour and truth; it is the reflection of the Neapolitan sun upon the rocks of Pausilippe. The Parthenopean Revolution is described therein in all its horrors, with the bloodthirsty and unblushing nakedness of the peoples of the South. M. de Latouche had, besides, rediscovered, collected and published the poetry of André Chénier. He easily made people believe that these poems were if not quite all his own, at least in a great measure his. We will concede that M. Henri de Latouche concocted

a hemistich here and there where it was wanting, and joined up a rhyme which the pen had forgotten to connect, but that the verses of André Chénier are by M. de Latouche we will not grant!

We only knew M. de Latouche slightly; at the same time, we do not believe that there was so great a capacity for the renunciation of glory on his part as this, that he gave to André Chénier, twenty-five years after the death of the young poet, that European reputation from which he was able to enrich himself. Yet M. de Latouche wrote very fine verse; Frédérick Soulié, who was then on friendly terms with him, told me at times that his poetry was of marvellous composition and supreme originality. In short, M. de Latouche, a solitary misanthrope, a harsh critic, a capricious friend, had just written a five-act prose comedy upon the most immodest subject in France and Spain; not content with shaking the bells of Comus, as said the members of the Caveau, he rang a full peal on the bells of the theatre of the rue de Richelieu. This comedy took for its theme the impotence of King Charles II., and for plot, the advantage accruing to Austria supposing the husband of Marie-Louise d'Orléans produced a child, and the advantage to France supposing his wife did not have one. As may be seen it was a delicate subject. It must be admitted that M. de Latouche's redundant imagination had found a way of skating over the risks of danger which threatened ordinary authors. When one act is finished it is usually the same with the author as with the sufferer put to the rack: he has a rest, but lives in expectation of fresh tortures to follow. But M. de Latouche would not allow himself any moments of repose; he substituted Interludes between the acts. We will reproduce verbatim the interlude between the second and the third act. It is needless to explain the situation: the reader will easily guess that, thanks to the efforts of the king's physician, Austria is on the way to triumph over France.

"INTERLUDE

"The personages go out, and after a few minutes interval, the footlights are lowered; night descends. The Chamberlain,

preceded by torches, appears at the door of the Queen's apartment, and knocks upon it with his sword-hilt; the head lady-in-waiting comes to the door. They whisper together; the Chamberlain disappears; then, upon a sign from the head lady-in-waiting, the Queen's women arrive successively and ceremoniously group themselves around their chief. A young lady-in-waiting holds back the velvet curtain over the Queen's bedroom. The king's cortège advances; two pages precede his Majesty, holding upon rich cushions the king's sword and the king's breeches. His Majesty is in his night attire of silk, embroidered with gold flowers, edged with ermine; two crowns are embroidered on the lapels. Charles II. wears, carried on a sash, the blue ribbon of France, in honour of the niece of Louis XIV. While passing in front of the line of courtiers, he makes sundry gestures of recognition, pleasure and satisfaction, and the recipients of these marks of favour express their delight. Charles II. stops a moment: according to etiquette he has to hand the candlestick borne by one of the officers to one of the Queen's ladies. His Majesty chooses at a glance the prettiest girl and indicates this favour by a gesture. Two ladies receives the breeches and the sword from the hands of the pages, the others allow the King to pass and quickly close up their ranks. When the curtain has fallen behind his Majesty, the nurse cries, *Vive le roi*! This cry is repeated by all those present. A symphony, which at first solemnly began with the air of the *Folies d'Espagne*, ends the concert with a serenade."

The work was performed but once and it has not yet been played in its entirety. From that very night M. de Latouche withdrew his play. But, although the public forgot his drama, M. de Latouche was of too irascible and too vindictive a nature to let the public forget it. He did pretty much what M. Arnault did: he appealed from the performance to the printed edition; only, he did not dedicate the *Reine d'Espagne* to the prompter. People had heard too much of what the actors had said, from the first word to the last; the play failed through a revolt of modesty and morality, and so the author contested the question of indecency and immorality. We will reproduce the preface of our fellow-dramatist de Latouche. As annalist we

relate the fact; as keeper of archives, we find room for the memorandum in our archives.[1]

The protest he made was not enough; he followed it up by pointing out, in the printed play, every fluctuation of feeling shown in the pit and even in the boxes. Thus, one finds successively the following notes at the foot of his pages—

.·. Here they begin to cough.

.·. Whispers. The piece is attacked by persons as thoroughly informed beforehand as the author of the risks of this somewhat novel situation.

As a matter of fact, the situation was so novel, that the public would not allow it to grow old.

.·. Here the whispers redouble.

.·. The pit rises divided between two opinions.

.·. This detail of manners, accurately historic, excites lively disapproval.

See, at page 56 of the play, the detail of manners.

.·. Uproar.

.·. A pretty general rising caused by a chaste interpretation suggested by the pit.

See page 72, for the suggestion of this chaste interpretation.

.·. Prolonged, *Oh! oh!s.*

.·. They laugh.

.·. They become indignant. *A voice*: "It takes two to make a child!"

.·. Interruption.

.·. Movement of disapprobation; the white hair of the old monk should, however, put aside all ideas of indecency in this interview.

.·. Deserved disapproval.

.·. The sentence is cut in two by an obscene interruption.

See the sentence, on page 115.

.·. Disapproval.

.·. After this scene (*the seventh of the fourth act*) the piece, scarcely listened to at all, was not criticised any further.

This was the only attempt M. de Latouche made at the theatre, and, from that time onwards, la Vallée-aux-Loups more than ever deserved its name.

[1] See end of volume.

CHAPTER VII

Victor Escousse and Auguste Lebras

MEANWHILE, the drama of *Pierre III.* by the unfortunate Escousse was played at the Théâtre-Français. I did not see *Pierre III.*; I tried to get hold of it to read it, but it seems that the drama has not been printed.

This is what Lesur said about it in his *Annuaire* for 1831—

"THÉÂTRE-FRANÇAIS (28 *December*).—First performance of *Pierre III.*, a drama in five acts; in verse, by M. Escousse.

"The failure of this work dealt a fatal blow to its author; carried away, as he probably was, with the success of *Farruck le Maure.* In *Pierre III.*, neither history, nor probability, nor reason, was respected. It was a deplorable specimen of the fanatical and uncouth style of literature (these two epithets are my own), made fashionable by men possessed of too real a talent for their example not to cause many lamentable imitations. But who could suspect that the author's life was bound up in his work? Yet one more trial, one more failure and the unhappy young man was to die! . . ."

And, indeed, Victor Escousse and Auguste Lebras in collaboration soon put on at the Gaieté the drama of *Raymond*, which also failed. Criticism must have been cruelly incensed against this drama, since we find, after the last words of the play, a postscript containing these few lines, signed by one of the authors—

"P.S.—This work roused much criticism against us, and it must be admitted, few people have made allowances for two poor young fellows, the oldest of whom is scarcely twenty, in the attempt which they made to create an interesting situation with

five characters, rejecting all the accessories of melodrama. But I have no intention of seeking to defend ourselves. I simply wish to proclaim the gratitude that I owe to Victor Escousse, who, in order to open the way for my entry into theatrical circles, admitted me to collaboration with himself; I also wish to defend him, as far as it is in my power, against the calumnious statements which are openly made against his character as a man; imputing a ridiculous vanity to him which I have never noticed in him. I say it publicly, I have nothing but praise to give him in respect of his behaviour towards me, not only as collaborator, but still more as a friend. May these few words, thus frankly written, soften the darts which hatred has been pleased to hurl against a young man whose talent, I hope, will some day stifle the words of those who attack him without knowing him! AUGUSTE LEBRAS"

Yet Escousse had so thoroughly understood the fact that with success would come struggle, and with the amelioration of material position would come a recrudescence in moral suffering, that, after the success in *Farruck le Maure*, when he left his little workman's room to take rather more comfortable quarters as an honoured author, he addressed to that room, the witness of his first emotions as poet and lover, the lines here given—

À MA CHAMBRE

" De mon indépendance,
Adieu, premier séjour,
Où mon adolescence
A duré moins d'un jour!
Bien que peu je regrette
Un passé déchirant,
Pourtant, pauvre chambrette,
Je vous quitte en pleurant!

Du sort, avec courage,
J'ai subi tous les coups;
Et, du moins, mon partage
N'a pu faire un jaloux.
La faim, dans ma retraite,
M'accueillait en rentrant . . .
Pourtant, pauvre chambrette,
Je vous quitte en pleurant!

Au sein de la détresse,
Quand je suçais mon lait,
Une tendre maîtresse
Point ne me consolait.
Solitaire couchette
M'endormait soupirant . . .
Pourtant, pauvre chambrette,
Je vous quitte en pleurant !

De ma muse, si tendre,
Un Dieu capricieux
Ne venait point entendre
Le sons ambitieux.
Briller pour l'indiscrète,
Est besoin dévorant . . .
Pourtant, pauvre chambrette,
Je vous quitte en pleurant !

Adieu ! le sort m'appelle
Vers un monde nouveau ;
Dans couchette plus belle,
J'oublîrai mon berceau.
Peut-être, humble poëte
Lion de vous sera grand . . .
Pourtant, pauvre chambrette,
Je vous quitte en pleurant ! "

In fact, that set of apartments which Escousse had taken in place of his room, and where, it will be seen, he had not installed himself without pain, saw him enter on 18 February, with his friend Auguste Lebras, followed by the daughter of the porter, who was carrying a bushel of charcoal. He had just bought this charcoal from the neighbouring greengrocer. While the woman was measuring it out, he said to Lebras—

"Do you think a bushel is enough ? "

"Oh, yes ! " replied the latter.

They paid, and asked that the charcoal might be sent at once. The porter's daughter left the bushel of charcoal in the anteroom at their request, and went away, little supposing she had just shut in Death with the two poor lads. Three days before, Escousse had taken the second key of his room from the portress on purpose to prevent any hindrance to this pre-

arranged plan. The two friends separated. The same night Escousse wrote to Lebras—

"I expect you at half-past eleven; the curtain will be raised. Come, so that we may hurry on the *dénoûment!*"

Lebras came at the appointed hour; he had no thought of failing to keep the appointment: the fatal thought of suicide had been germinating for a long while in his brain. The charcoal was already lit. They stuffed up the doors and windows with newspapers. Then Escousse went to a table and wrote the following note:—

"Escousse has killed himself because he does not feel he has any place in this life; because his strength fails him at every step he takes forwards or backwards; because fame does not satisfy his soul, *if soul there be!*

"I desire that the motto of my book may be—

"'Adieu, trop inféconde terre,
Fléaux humains, soleil glacé!
Comme un fantôme solitaire,
Inaperçu j'aurai passé.
Adieu, les palmes immortelles,
Vrai songe d'une âme de feu!
L'air manquait: J'ai fermé mes ailes, Adieu!'"

This, as we have said, took place at half-past eleven. At midnight, Madame Adolphe, who had just been acting at the Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin, returned home; she lodged on the same floor as Escousse, and the young man's suite of rooms was only separated from her's by a partition. A strange sound seemed to her to come from those rooms. She listened: she thought she heard a twofold noise as of raucous breathing. She called, she knocked on the partition, but she did not obtain any reply. Escousse's father also lived on the same floor, on which four doors opened; these four doors belonged to the rooms of Escousse, his father, Madame Adolphe and Walter, an actor I used to know well at that time, but of whom I have since lost sight. Madame Adolphe ran to the father of Escousse, awakened him (for he was already asleep), made him get up

and come with her to listen to the raucous breathing which had terrified her. It had decreased, but was still audible; audible enough for them to hear the dismal sound of two breathings. The father listened for a few seconds; then he laughingly said to Madame Adolphe, "You jealous woman!" And he went off to bed not wishing to listen to her observations any further.

Madame Adolphe remained by herself. Until two o'clock in the morning she heard this raucous sound to which she alone persisted in giving its true significance. Incredulous though Escousse's father had been, he was haunted by dismal presentiments all night long. About eight o'clock next morning he went and knocked at his son's door. No one answered. He listened; all was silent. Then the idea came to him that Escousse was at the Vauxhall baths, to which the young man sometimes went. He went to Walter's rooms, told him what had passed during the night, and of his uneasiness in the morning. Walter offered to run to Vauxhall, and the offer was accepted. At Vauxhall, Escousse had not been seen by anyone. The father's uneasiness increased; it was nearly his office hour, but he could not go until he was reassured by having his son's door opened. A locksmith was called in and the door was broken open with difficulty, for the key which had locked it from the inside was in the keyhole. The key being still in the lock frightened the poor father to such an extent that, when the door was open, he did not dare to cross the threshold. It was Walter who entered, whilst he remained leaning against the staircase bannisters. The inner door was, as we have said, stuffed up, but not closed either with bolt or key; Walter pushed it violently, broke through the obstructing paper and went in. The fumes of the charcoal were still so dense that he nearly fell back. Nevertheless, he penetrated into the room, seized the first object to hand, a water-bottle, I believe, and hurled it at the window. A pane of glass was broken by the crash, and gave ingress to the outer air. Walter could now breathe, and he went to the window and opened it.

Then the terrible spectacle revealed itself to him in all its

fearful nakedness. The two young men were lying dead: Lebras on the floor, upon a mattress which he had dragged from the bed; Escousse on the bed itself. Lebras, of weakly constitution and feeble health, had easily been overcome by death; but with his companion it had been otherwise; strong and full of health, the struggle had been long and must have been cruel; at least, this was what was indicated by his legs drawn up under his body and his clenched hands, with the nails driven into the flesh. The father nearly went out of his mind. Walter often told me that he should always see the two poor youths, one on his mattress, the other on his bed. Madame Adolphe did not dare to keep her rooms: whenever she woke in the night, she thought she could hear the death-rattle, which the poor father had taken for the sighs of lovers!

The excellent elegy which this suicide inspired Béranger to write is well-known; we could wish our readers had forgotten that we had given them part of it when we were speaking of the famous song-writer: that would have allowed us to quote the whole of it here; but how can they have forgotten that we have already fastened that rich poetic embroidery on to our rags of prose?

CHAPTER VIII

First performance of *Robert le Diable*—Véron, manager of the Opéra—His opinion concerning Meyerbeer's music—My opinion concerning Véron's intellect—My relations with him—His articles and *Memoirs*—Rossini's judgment of *Robert le Diable*—Nourrit, the preacher—Meyerbeer—First performance of the *Fuite de Law*, by M. Mennechet—First performance of *Richard Darlington*—Frédérick-Lemaître—Delafosse—Mademoiselle Noblet

LED away into reminiscences of Escousse and of Lebras, whom we followed from the failure of *Pierre III.* to the day of their death, from the evening of 28 December 1831, that is, to the night of 18 February 1832, we have passed over the first performances of *Richard Darlington* and even of *Térésa.* Let us go back a step and return to the night of 21 October, at one o'clock in the morning, to Nourrit's dressing room, who had just had a fall from the first floor of the Opéra owing to an ill-fitting trap-door.

The first representation of *Robert le Diable* had just been given. It would be a curious thing to write the history of that great opera, which nearly failed at the first representation, now reckons over four hundred performances and is the *doyen* of all operas now born and, probably, yet to be born. At first, Véron, who had passed from the management of the *Revue de Paris* to that of the Opéra, had from the first hearing of Meyerbeer's work,—in full rehearsal since its acceptance at the theatre of the rue Lepeletier,—declared that he thought the score detestable, and that he would only play it under compulsion or if provided with a sufficient indemnity. The government, which had just made, with respect to that new management, one of the most scandalous contracts which

have ever existed; the government, which at that period gave a subsidy to the Opéra of nine hundred thousand francs, thought Véron's demand quite natural; and convinced, with him, that the music of *Robert le Diable* was execrable, gave to its well-beloved manager sixty or eighty thousand francs subsidy for playing a work which now provides at least a third of the fifty or sixty thousand francs income which Véron enjoys. Does not this little anecdote prove that the tradition of putting a man at the Opéra who knows nothing about music goes back to an epoch anterior to the nomination of Nestor Roqueplan,—who, in his letters to Jules Janin, boasts that he does not know the value of a semibreve or the signification of a natural? No, it proves that Véron is a speculator of infinite shrewdness, and that his refusal to play Meyerbeer's opera was a clever speculation. Now, does Véron prefer that we should say that he was not learned in music? Let him correct our statement. It is common knowledge with what respect we submit to correction. There is one point concerning which we will not admit correction:. namely, what we have just said about Véron's intellect. What we here state we have repeated a score of times *speaking to him in person*, as a certain class of functionaries has it. Véron is a clever man, even a very clever man, and it would not be doubted if he had not the misfortune to be a millionaire. Véron and I were never on very friendly terms; he has never, I believe, had a high opinion of my talent. As editor of the *Revue de Paris* he never asked me for a single article; as manager of the Opéra, he has never asked me for anything but a single poem for Meyerbeer, and that on condition I wrote the poem in collaboration with Scribe; which nearly landed me in a quarrel with Meyerbeer and wholly in one with Scribe. Finally, as manager of the *Constitutionnel*, he only made use of me when the success which I had obtained on the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle* and the *Presse* had in some measure forced his hand. Our engagement lasted three years. During those three years we had a lawsuit which lasted three months; then, finally, we amicably broke the contract, when

I had still some twenty volumes to give him, and at the time of this rupture I owed him six thousand francs. It was agreed that I should give Véron twelve thousand lines for these six thousand francs. Some time after, Véron sold the *Constitutionnel*. For the first journal that Véron shall start, he can draw upon me for twelve thousand lines, at twelve days' sight: on the thirteenth day the signature shall be honoured. Our position with regard to Véron being thoroughly established, we repeat that it is Véron's millions which injure his reputation. How can it be admitted that a man can both possess money and intellect? The thing is impossible!

"But," it will be urged, "if Véron is a clever man, who writes his articles? Who composes his *Memoirs*?"

Some one else will reply—"He did not; they are written by Malitourne."

I pay no regard to what may lie underneath. When the articles or the *Memoirs* are signed Véron, both articles and *Memoirs* are by Véron so far as I am concerned: what else can you do? It is Véron's weakness to imagine that he can write. Good gracious! if he did not write, his reputation as an intellectual man would be made, in spite of his millions! But it happens that, thanks to these deuced articles and those blessed *Memoirs*, people laugh in my face when I say that Véron has intellect. It is in vain for me to be vexed and angry, and shout out and appeal to people who have supped with him, good judges in the matter of wit, to believe me; everybody replies, even those who have not supped with him: That is all very well! You say this because you owe M. Véron twelve thousand lines! As if because one owes a man twelve thousand lines it were a sufficient excuse for saying that he has intellect! Take, for example, the case of M. Tillot, of the *Siècle*, who says that I owe him twenty-four thousand lines; at that rate, I ought to say that he has twice as much intellect as Véron. But I do not say so; I will content myself with saying that I do not owe him those twenty-four thousand lines, and that he, on the contrary, owes me something like three or four hundred thousand francs or more, certainly not less.

But where on earth were we? Oh! I remember! we were talking about the first night of *Robert le Diable*. After the third act I met Rossini in the green-room.

"Come now, Rossini," I asked him, "what do you think of that?"

"Vat do I zink?" replied Rossini.

"Yes, what do you think of it?"

"Vell, I zink zat if my best friend vas vaiting for me at ze corner of a wood vis a pistol, and put zat pistol to my throat, zaying, 'Rossini, zu art going to make zur best opera!' I should do it."

"And suppose you had no one friendly enough towards you to render you this service?"

"Ah! in zat case all vould be at an end, and I azzure you zat I vould never write one zingle note of music again!"

Alas! the friend was not forthcoming, and Rossini kept his oath.

I meditated upon these words of the illustrious maestro during the fourth and fifth acts of *Robert*, and, after the fifth act, I went to the stage to inquire of Nourrit if he was not hurt. I felt a strong friendship towards Nourrit, and he, on his side, was much attached to me. Nourrit was not only an eminent actor, he was also a delightful man; he had but one fault: when you paid him a compliment on his acting or on his voice, he would listen to you in a melancholy fashion, and reply with his hand on your shoulder—

"Ah! my friend, I was not born to be a singer or a comedian!"

"Indeed! Then why were you born?"

"I was born to mount a pulpit, not a stage."

"A pulpit!"

"Yes."

"And what the deuce would you do in a pulpit?"

"I should guide humanity in the way of progress. . . . Oh! you misjudge me; you do not know my real character."

Poor Nourrit! He made a great mistake in wanting to have been or to appear other than he was: he was a

delightful player! a dignified and noble and kindly natured man! He had taken the Revolution of 1830 very seriously, and, for three months, he appeared every other day on the stage of the Opera as a National Guard, singing the *Marseillaise*, flag in hand. Unluckily, his patriotism was sturdier than his voice, and he broke his voice in that exercise. It was because his voice had already become weaker that Meyerbeer put so little singing in the part of Robert. Nourrit was in despair, not because of his failure, but because of that of the piece. In common with everyone else, he thought the work had failed. Meyerbeer was himself quite melancholy enough! Nourrit introduced us to one another. Our acquaintance dates from that night.

Meyerbeer was a very clever man; from the first he had had the sense to place a great fortune at the service of an immense reputation. Only, he did not make his fortune with his reputation; it might almost be said that he made his reputation with his fortune. Meyerbeer was never for one instant led aside from his object,—whether he was by himself or in society, in France or in Germany, at the table of the hotel *des Princes* or at the Casino at Spa,—and that object was success. Most assuredly, Meyerbeer gave himself more trouble to achieve success than in writing his scores. We say this because it seems to us that there are two courses to take. Meyerbeer should leave his scores to make their own successes; we should gain one opera out of every three. I admire the more this quality of tenacity of purpose in a man since it is entirely lacking in myself. I have always let managers look after their interests and mine on first nights; and, next day, upon my word! let people say what they like, whether good or ill! I have been working for the stage for twenty-five years now, and writing books for as long: I challenge a single newspaper editor to say he has seen me in his office to ask the favour of a single puff. Perhaps in this indifference lies my strength. In the five or six years that have just gone by, as soon as my plays have been put on the stage, with all the care and

intelligence of which I am capable, it has often happened that I have not been present at my first performance, but have waited to hear any news about it that others, more curious than myself, who had been present, should bring me.

But at the time of *Richard Darlington* I had not yet attained to this high degree of philosophy. As soon as the play was finished, it had been read to Harel, who had just left the management of the Odéon to take up that of the Porte-Saint-Martin, and, be it said, Harel had accepted it at once; he had immediately put it in rehearsal, and, after a month of rehearsals, all scrupulously attended by me, we had got to 10 December, the day fixed for the first performance. The Théâtre-Français was in competition with us, and played the same day *La Fuite de Law*, by M. Mennechet, ex-reader to King Charles X. In his capacity of ex-reader to King Charles X., Mennechet was a Royalist. I shall always recollect the sighs he heaved when he was compelled, as editor of *Plutarque français*, to insert in it the biography of the Emperor Napoleon. Had he been in a position to consult his own personal feelings only, he would certainly have excluded from his publication the Conqueror of Marengo, of Austerlitz and of Jena; but he was not the complete master of it: since Napoleon had taken Cairo, Berlin, Vienna and Moscow, he had surely the right to monopolise fifty or sixty columns in the *Plutarque français*. I know something about those sighs; for he came to ask me for that biography of Napoleon, and it was I who drew it up. In spite of the competition of the Théâtre-Français there was a tremendous stir over *Richard*. It was known beforehand that the play had a political side to it of great significance, and the feverishness of men's minds at that period made a storm out of everything. People crushed at the doors to get tickets. At the rising of the curtain the house seemed full to overflowing. Frédérick was the pillar who supported the whole affair. He had supporting him, Mademoiselle Noblet, Delafosse, Doligny and Madame Zélie-Paul. But so great was the power of

this fine dramatic genius that he electrified everybody. Everyone in some degree was inspired by him, and by contact with him increased his own strength without decreasing that of the great player. Frédérick was then in the full zenith of his talent. Unequal like Kean,—whose personality he was to copy two or three years later,—sublime like Kean, he had the same qualities he exhibits to-day, and, though in a lesser degree, the same defects. He was just the same then in the relations of ordinary life,—difficult, unsociable, capricious, as he is to-day. In other respects he was a man of sound judgment; taking as much interest in the play as in his own part in the suggestions he proposed, and as much interest in the author as in himself. He had been excellent at the rehearsals. At the performance itself he was magnificent! I do not know where he had studied that gambler on the grand scale whom we style an ambitious man; men of genius must study in their own hearts what they cannot know except in dreams. Next to Frédérick, Doligny was capital in the part of Tompson. It was to the recollection I had of him in this rôle that the poor fellow owed, later, the sad privilege of being associated with me in my misfortunes. Delafosse, who played Mawbray, had moments of genuine greatness. One instance of it was where he waits at the edge of a wood, in a fearful storm, for the passing of the post-chaise in which Tompson is carrying off Jenny. An accident which might have made a hitch and upset the play at that juncture was warded off by his presence of mind. Mawbray has to kill Tompson by shooting him; for greater security, Delafosse had taken two pistols; real stage-pistols, hired from a gunsmith,—they both missed fire! Delafosse never lost his head: he made a pretence of drawing a dagger from his pocket, and killed Tompson with a blow from his fist, as he had not been able to blow out his brains. Mademoiselle Noblet was fascinatingly tender and loving, a charming and poetic being. In the last scene she fell so completely under Frédérick's influence as to utter cries of genuine not feigned terror. The fable took on all the proportions of

reality for her. The final scene was one of the most terrible I ever saw on the stage. When Jenny asked him, "What are you going to do?" and Richard replied, "I do not know; but pray to God!" a tremendous shudder ran all over the house, and a murmur of fear, escaping from every breast, became an actual shriek of terror. At the conclusion of the second act Harel had come up to my *avant-scène*:[1]—I had the chief *avant-scène* by right, and from it I could view the performance as though I were a stranger. Harel, I say, came up to entreat me to have my name mentioned with that of Dinaux: the name, be it known, by which Goubaux and Beudin were known on the stage. I refused. During the third act he came up again, accompanied this time by my two collaborators, and furnished with three bank-notes of a thousand francs each. Goubaux and Beudin, good, excellent, brotherly hearted fellows, came to ask me to have my name given alone. I had done the whole thing, they said, and my right to the success was incontestable. I had done the whole thing!—except finding the subject, except providing the outlines of the development, except, finally, the execution of the chief scene between the king and Richard, the scene in which I had completely failed. I embraced them and refused. Harel offered me the three thousand francs. He had come at an opportune moment: tears were in my eyes, and I held a hand of each of my two friends in mine. I refused him, but I did not embrace him. The curtain fell in the midst of frantic applause. They called Richard before the curtain, then Jenny, Tompson, Mawbray, the whole company. I took advantage of the spectators being still glued to their places to go out and make for the door of communication. I wanted to take the actors in my arms on their return to the wings. I came across Musset in the corridor; he was very pale and very much moved.

"Well," I asked him; "what is the matter, my dear poet?"

"I am suffocating!" he replied.

[1] At the front of the stage.—TRANS.

It was, I think, the finest praise he could have paid the work,—the drama of *Richard* is, indeed, suffocating. I reached the wings in time to shake hands with everybody. And yet I did not feel the same emotion as on the night of *Antony*! The success had been as great, but the players were nothing like as dear to me. There is an abyss between my character and habits and those of Frédérick which three triumphs in common have not enabled either of us to bridge. What a difference between my friendship with Bocage! Between Mademoiselle Noblet and myself, pretty and fascinating as she was at that date, there existed none but purely artistic relations; she interested me as a young and beautiful person of promising future, and that was all. What a difference, to be sure, from the double and triple feelings with which Dorval inspired me! Although to-day the most active of these sentiments has been extinguished these twenty years; though she herself has been dead for four or five years, and forgotten by most people who should have remembered her, and who did not even see her taken to her last resting-place, her name falls constantly from my pen, just as her memory strikes ever a pang at my heart! Perhaps it will be said that my joy was not so great because my name remained unknown and my personality concealed. On that head I have not even the shadow of a regret. I can answer for it that my two collaborators were more sadly troubled at being named alone than I at not being named at all. *Richard* had an immense success, and it was just that it should: *Richard*, without question, is an excellent drama. I beg leave to be as frank concerning myself as I am with regard to others.

Twenty-one days after the performance of *Richard Darlington* the year 1831 went to join its sisters in that unknown world to which Villon relegates dead moons, and where he seeks, without finding them, the snows of yester year. Troubled though the year had been by political disturbances, it had been splendid for art. I had produced three pieces,—one bad, *Napoléon Bonaparte*; one mediocre, *Charles VII.*; and one good, *Richard Darlington.*

Hugo had put forth *Marion Delorme*, and had published *Notre-Dame de Paris*—something more than a *roman*, a book! —and his volume the *Feuilles d'Automne*.

Balzac had published the *Peau de chagrin*, one of his most irritating productions. Once for all, my estimation of Balzac, both as a man and as an author, is not to be relied upon: as a man, I knew him but little, and what I did know did not rouse in me the least sympathy; as regards his talent, his manner of composition, of creation, of production, were so different from mine, that I am a bad judge of him, and I condemn myself on this head, quite conscious that I can justly be called in question.

But to continue. Does my reader know, omitting mention of M. Comte's theatre and of that of the Funambules, what was played in Paris from 1 January 1809 to 31 December 1831? Well, there were played 3558 theatrical pieces, to which Scribe contributed 135; Théaulor, 94; Brazier, 93; Dartois, 92, Mélesville, 80; Dupin, 56; Antier, 53; Dumersan, 55; de Courcy, 50. The whole world compared with this could not have provided a quarter of it! Nor was painting far behind: Vernet had reached the zenith of his talent; Delacroix and Delaroche were ascending the upward path of theirs. Vernet had exhibited . . . But before speaking of their works, let us say a few words of the men themselves.

CHAPTER IX

Horace Vernet

VERNET was then a man of forty-two. You are acquainted with Horace Vernet, are you not? I will not say as painter—pooh! who does not know, indeed, the artist of the *Bataille de Montmirail*, of the *Prise de Constantine*, of the *Déroute de la Smala?* No, I mean as man. You will have seen him pass a score of times, chasing the stag or the boar, in shooting costume; or crossing the place du Carrousel, or parading in the court of the Tuileries, in the brilliant uniform of a staff officer. He was a handsome cavalier, a dainty, lithe, tall figure, with sparkling eyes, high cheek-bones, a mobile face and moustaches *à la royale Louis XIII.* Imagine him something like d'Artagnan. For Horace looked far more like a musketeer than a painter; or, say, like a painter of the type of Velasquez, or Van Dyck, and, like the Cavalier Tempesta, with curled-up moustache, sword dangling against his heels, his horse snorting forth fire from its nostrils. The whole race of Vernets were of a similar type. Joseph Vernet, the grandfather, had himself bound to a ship's mast during a tempest. Karl Vernet, the father, would, I am certain, have given many things to have been carried off, like Mazeppa, across the Steppes of Ukraine on a furious horse, reeking with foam and blood. For, be it known, Horace Vernet brings up the rear of a quadruple series, the latest of four generations of painters,—he is the son of Karl, the grandson of Joseph Vernet, the great-grandson of Antoine. Then, as though this were not enough, his maternal ancestor was the younger Moreau, that is to say, one of the foremost draughts-

men and ablest engravers of the eighteenth century. Antoine Vernet painted flowers upon sedan chairs. There are two chairs painted and signed by him at Marseilles. Joseph Vernet has adorned every museum in France with his sea pictures. He is to Havre, Brest, Lorient, Marseilles and Toulon what Canaletto is to Venice.

Karl, who began by bearing off the *grand prix* of Rome with his composition of the *Enfant prodigue*, became, in 1786, an enthusiastic painter of everything English. The Duc d'Orléans bought at fabulous prices the finest of English horses. Karl Vernet became mad on horses, drew them, painted them, made them his speciality and so became famous. As for Horace, he was born in 1789, the year in which his grandfather Joseph died and his father Karl was made an Academician. Born a painter, so to say, his first steps were taken in a studio.

"Who is your master?" I once asked him.

"I never had one."

"But who taught you to draw and paint?"

"I do not know. . . . When I could only walk on all fours I used to pick up pencils and paint brushes. When I found paper I drew; when I found canvas I painted, and one fine day it was discovered that I was a painter."

When ten years old, Horace sold his first drawing to a merchant: it was a tulip commissioned by Madame de Périgord. This was the first money he had earned, twenty-four sous! And the merchant paid him these twenty-four sous in one of those white coins that were still to be seen about in 1816, but which we do not see now and shall probably not see again. This happened in 1799. From that moment Horace Vernet found a market for drawings, rough sketches and six-inch canvases. In 1811 the King of Westphalia commissioned his first two pictures: the *Prise du camp retranché de Galatz* and the *Prise de Breslau*. I have seen them scores of times at King Jérome's palace; they are not your best work, my dear Horace! But they brought him in sixteen thousand francs. It was the first considerable sum of money he had received; it was the first out of which he could

put something aside. Then came 1812, 1813 and 1814, and the downfall of the whole Napoleonic edifice. The world shook to its foundations: Europe became a volcano, society seemed about to dissolve. There was no thought of painting, or literature, or art! What do you suppose became of Vernet, who could not then obtain for his pictures eight thousand francs, or four thousand, or a thousand, or five hundred, or a hundred, or even fifty? Vernet drew designs for the *Journal des Modes*;—three for a hundred francs: 33 francs 33 centimes each drawing! One day he showed me all these drawings, a collection of which he kept; I counted nearly fifteen hundred of them with feelings of profound emotion. The 33 francs 33 centimes brought to my mind my 166 francs 65 centimes,—the highest figure my salary had ever reached. Vernet was a child of the Revolution; but as a young man he knew only the Empire. An ardent Bonapartist in 1815, more fervent still, perhaps, in 1816, he gave many sword strokes and sweeps of the paint brush in honour of Napoleon, both exercised as secretly as possible. In 1818, the Duc d'Orléans conceived the idea of ordering Vernet to paint pictures for him. The suggestion was transmitted to the painter on the prince's behalf.

"Willingly," said the painter, "but on condition that they shall be military pictures."

The prince accepted.

"That the pictures," added the painter, "shall be of the time of the Republic and of the Empire."

Again the prince acceded.

"Finally," added the painter, "on condition that the soldiers of the Empire and of the Revolution shall wear tricolor cockades."

"Tell M. Vernet," replied the prince to this, "that he can put the first cockade in my hat."

And as a matter of fact the Duc d'Orléans decided that the first picture which Vernet should execute for him should be of himself as Colonel of Dragoons, saving a poor refractory priest: a piece of good fortune which befell the prince in 1792, and

which has been related by us at length in our *Histoire de Louis Philippe*. Horace Vernet painted the picture and had the pleasure of putting the first tricolor cockade ostentatiously on the helmet. About this time the Duc de Berry urgently desired to visit the painter's studio, whose reputation grew with the rapidity of the giant Adamastor. But Vernet did not love the Bourbons, especially those of the Older Branch. With the Duc d'Orléans it was different; he had been a Jacobin. Horace refused admission to his studio to the son of Charles x.

"Oh! Good gracious!" said the Duc de Berry, "if in order to be received by M. Vernet it is but a question of putting on a tricolor cockade, tell him that, although I do not wear M. Laffitte's colours at my heart, I will put them in my hat, if it must be so, the day I enter his house."

The suggestion did not come to anything either, because the painter did not accede to it; or because, the painter having acceded to it, the prince declined to submit to such an exacting condition.

In less than eighteen months Vernet painted for the Duc d'Orléans—the condition concerning the tricolor cockades being always respected—the fine series of pictures which constitute his best work: *Montmirail*, in which he puts more than tricolor cockades, namely, the Emperor himself riding away into the distance on his white horse; *Hanau*, *Jemappes* and *Valmy*. But all these tricolor cockades, which blossomed on Horace's canvases like poppies, cornflowers and marguerites in a meadow, and above all, that detestable white horse, although it was no bigger than a pin's head, frightened the government of Louis xviii. The exhibition of 1821 declined Horace Vernet's pictures. The artist held an exhibition at his own house, and had a greater success by himself than the two thousand painters had who exhibited at the Salon. This was the time of his great popularity. No one was allowed at that period, not even his enemies, to dispute his talent. Vernet was more than a celebrated painter: he belonged to the nation, representing in the world of art the spirit of opposition which was beginning to make the reputations of Béranger and of

Casimir Delavigne in the world of poetry. He lived in the rue de la Tour-des-Dames. All that quarter had just sprung into being; it was the artists' quarter. Talma, Mademoiselle Mars, Mademoiselle Duchesnois, Arnault lived there. It was called *La Nouvelle Athènes*. They all carried on the spirit of opposition in their own particular ways: Mademoiselle Mars with her violets, M. Arnault with his stories, Talma with his Sylla wig, Horace Vernet with his tricolor cockades, Mademoiselle Duchesnois with what she could. One consecration was still lacking in the matter of Horace Vernet's popularity; he obtained it, that is to say, he was appointed director of the École Française at Rome. Perhaps this was a means of getting him sent away from Paris. But the exile, if such it was, looked so much more like an honour that Vernet accepted it with joy. Criticism grumbled a little;—it was the time of the raising of Voices!—Some complained in the hoarse notes, others in the screaming tones which are the peculiar property of the envious, exclaiming that it was rather a risk to send to Rome the propagator of tricolor cockades, and rather a bold stroke to bring into juxtaposition *Montmirail* and *The Transfiguration*, Horace Vernet and Raphael; but these voices were drowned in the universal acclamation which hailed the honour done to our national painter. It was certainly not Vernet's enemies who should have indulged in recrimination; but rather his friends who should have felt afraid. In fact, when Horace Vernet found himself confronted with the masterpieces of the sixteenth century, even as Raphael when led into the Sistine Chapel by Bramante, he was seized with a spasm of doubt. The whole of his education as a painter was called in question. He felt he had been self-deceived for thirty years of his life;—at the age of thirty-two, Horace had already been a painter for thirty years!—he asked himself whether, instead of those worthy full-length soldiers, clad in military capot and shako, he was not destined to paint naked giants; the *Iliad* of Homer instead of the *Iliad* of Napoleon. The unhappy painter set himself to paint great pictures. The Roman school was in a flourishing state upon his arrival.—Vernet succeeded to

Guérin;—under Vernet it became splendid. The indefatigable artist, the never-ceasing creator, communicated a portion of his fecund spirit to all those young minds. Like a sun he lighted up and warmed throughout and ripened everything with his rays. One year after his arrival in Rome he must needs erect an exhibition hall in the garden of the École. Féron, from whom the institute asked an eighteen-inch sketch, gave a twenty-feet picture, the *Passage des Alpes*; Debay gave the *Mort de Lucrèce*; Bouchot, a *Bacchanale*; Rivière, a *Peste apaisée par les prières du pape*. Sculptors created groups of statuary, or at the least statues, instead of statuettes; Dumont sent *Bacchus aux bras de sa nourrice*; Duret, the *Invention de la Lyre*. It was such an outpouring of productions that the Academy was frightened. It complained that the École de Rome *produced too much*. This was the only reproach they had to bring against Vernet during his Ultramontane Vice-regency. He himself worked as hard as a student, two students, ten students. He sent his *Raphaël et Michel-Ange*, his *Exaltation du pape*, his *Arrestation du prince de Condé*, his . . . Happily for Horace, I cannot recollect any more he sent in at that period.

I repeat once more, the sight of the old masters had upset all his old ideas;—in the slang of the studio, Horace splashed about. I say this because I am quite certain that it is his own opinion. If it is possible that Horace could turn out any bad painting—if he has ever done so—and he alone has the right to say this—is it not the fact, dear Horace, that the bad painting which many artists point out with glee and triumph was done in Rome. But this period of relative inferiority for Horace, which was only below his own average in painting in what is termed the "grand style," was not without its profit to the artist; he drank the wine of life from its main source, the eternal spring! He returned to France strengthened by a force invisible to all, unrealised by himself, and after seven years spent in the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel and the Farnesina, he found himself more at ease among his barracks and battlefields, which many people said, and said wrongly, that he ought not to have quitted.

Ah! Horace led a fine life, dashing through Europe on horseback, across Africa on a dromedary, over the Mediterranean in a ship! A glorious, noble and loyal life at which criticism may scoff, but in respect of which no reproach can be uttered by France.

Now, during this year—*nous revenons à nos moutons*, as M. Berger puts it—Horace sent two pictures from Rome, namely, those we have mentioned already: the *Exaltation du pape*, one of the best of his worst pictures, and the *Arrestation du prince de Condé*, one of the best of his best pictures.

CHAPTER X

Paul Delaroche

DELAROCHE exhibited his three masterpieces at the Salon of 1831: the *Enfants d'Édouard; Cinq-mars et de Thou remontant le Rhône à la remorque du Cardinal de Richelieu*, and the *Jeu du Cardinal de Mazarin à son lit de mort.*

It is hardly necessary to say that of these three pictures we prefer the *Cinq-mars et de Thou remontant le Rhône.*

The biography of the eminent artist will not be long. His is not an eccentric character, nor one of those impetuous temperaments which seek adventures. He did not have his collar-bone broken when he was fifteen, three ribs staved in at thirty, and his head cut open at forty-five, as did Vernet; he does not expose his body in every political quarrel; his recreations are not those of fencing, horse-riding and shooting. He rests from work by dreaming, and not by some fresh fatiguing occupation; for although his work is masterly, it is heavy, laboured and melancholy. Instead of saying before Heaven openly, when showing his pictures to men and thanking God for having given him the power to paint them, "Behold, I am an artist! Vivent Raphaël and Michael Angelo!" he conceals them, he hides them, he withdraws them from sight, murmuring, "Ah! I was not made for brush, canvas and colours: I was made for political and diplomatic career. Vivent M. de Talleyrand and M. de Metternich!" Oh! how unhappy are those spirits, those restless souls, who do one thing and torment themselves with the everlasting anxiety that they were created to do something else.

In 1831, Paul Delaroche was thirty-four, and just about at the height of his strength and his talent. He was the second son of a pawnbroker. He early entered the studio of Gros, who was then in the zenith of his fame, and who, after his beautiful pictures of *Jaffa*, *Aboukir* and *Eylau*, was about to undertake the gigantic dome of the Pantheon. He made genuine and rapid advance in harmony with the design and taste of the master. Nevertheless, Delaroche began with landscape. His brother painted historical subjects, and the father did not wish both his two sons to apply themselves to the same kind of painting. Claude Lorraines and Ruysdaels were accordingly the studios preferred by Paul; a woman with whom he fell in love, and whose portrait he persisted in painting, changed his inclinations. This portrait finished and found to be acceptable (*bien venu*), as they say in studio language, Delaroche was won over to the grand school of painting. He made his first appearance in the Salon of 1822, when he was twenty-five years of age, with a *Joas arraché du milieu des morts par Josabeth*, and a *Christ descendu de la croix*. In 1824, he exhibited *Jeanne d'Arc interrogée dans son cachot par le Cardinal de Winchester*, *Saint Vincent de Paul prêchant pour les enfants trouvés*, *Saint Sébastien secouru par Irene* and *Filippo Lippi chargé de peindre une vierge pour une convent, et devenant amoureux de la religieuse qui lui sert de modèle.*

The *Jeanne d'Arc* made a great impression. Instead of being talked of as a painter of great promise, Delaroche was looked upon as a master who had realised these hopes.

In 1826 he exhibited his *Mort de Carrache*, *Le Prétendant sauvé par Miss MacDonald*, the *Nuit de la Saint Barthélemy*, the *Mort d'Élisabeth* and the full-length portrait of the Dauphin.

The whole world stood to gaze at Elizabeth, pallid, dying, dead already from the waist down. I was riveted in front of the young Scotch girl, exquisitely sympathetic and admirably romantic in feeling. *Cinq-Mars* and *Miss MacDonald* were alone enough to make Delaroche a great painter. What delicious handling there is in the latter picture, sweet, tender,

moving! What suppleness and *morbidezza* in those golden fifteen years, born on the wings of youth, scarcely touching the earth! O Delaroche! you are a great painter! But if you had only painted four pictures equal to your *Miss MacDonald*, how you would have been adored!

In 1827, he first produced a political picture, the *Prise du Trocadéro*; then the *Mort du Président Duranti*, a great and magnificent canvas, three figures of the first order: the president, his wife and his child; the figure of the child, in particular, who is holding up—or, rather, stretching up—its hands to heaven; and a ceiling for the Charles x. Museum, of which I will not speak, as I do not remember it. Finally, in 1831, the period we have reached, Delaroche exhibited *Les Enfants d'Édouard*, *Cinq-Mars et de Thou*, the *Jeu de Mazarin*, the portrait of Mlle. Sontag and a *Lecture*. The painter's reputation, as we have said, had then reached its height. You remember those two children sitting on a bed, one sickly, the other full of health; the little barking dog; the ray of light that comes into the prison through the chink beneath the door. You remember the Richelieu—ill, coughing, attenuated, with no more strength to cause the death of others; the beautiful figure of Cinq-Mars, calm, in his exquisite costume of white satin, pink and white under his pearl-grey hat; the grave de Thou, in his dark dress, looking at the scaffold in the distance, which was to assume for him so terrible an aspect on nearer view; those guards, those rowers, the soldier eating and the other who is spluttering in the water. The whole is exquisitely composed and executed, full of intellect and thought, and particularly full of skill—skill, yes! for Delaroche *par excellence* is the dexterous painter. He possesses the expertness of Casimir Delavigne, with whom he has all kinds of points of resemblance, although, in our opinion, he strikes us as being stronger, as a painter, than Casimir Delavigne as a dramatic author. Every artist has his double in some kindred contemporary. Hugo and Delacroix have many points of contact; I pride myself upon my resemblance to Vernet.

Delaroche's skill is, indeed, great; not that we think it the fruit of studied calculation, such cleverness is intuitive, and, perhaps, not so much an acquired quality as a natural gift, a gift that is doubtless rather a negative one, from the point of view of art. I prefer certain painters, poets and players who are inclined to err on the side of being awkward rather than too skilful. But, just as all the studying in the world will not change clumsiness into skilfulness, so you cannot cure a clever man of his defect. Therefore, although it is a singular statement to make, Delaroche has the defect of being too skilful. If a man is going to his execution, Delaroche will not choose the shuddering moment when the guards open the doors of the prison, nor the terror-stricken instant when the victim catches sight of the scaffold. No, the resigned victim will pass before the window of the Bishop of London; as he descends a staircase, will kneel with downcast eyes and receive the benediction bestowed on him by two white aristocratic trembling hands thrust through the bars of that window. If he paints the assassination of the Duc de Guise, he does not choose the moment of struggle, the supreme instant when the features contract in spasms of anger, in convulsions of agony; when the hands dig into the flesh and tear out hair; when hearts drink vengeance and daggers drink blood. No, it is the moment when all is over, when the Duc de Guise is laid dead at the foot of the bed, when daggers and swords are wiped clean and cloaks have hidden the rending of the doublet, when the murderers open the door to the assassin, and Henri III. enters, pale and trembling, and recoils as he comes in murmuring—

"Why, he must have been ten feet high?—he looks taller lying down than standing, dead than alive!"

Again, if he paints the children of Edward, he does not choose the moment when the executioners of Richard III. rush upon the poor innocent boys and stifle their cries and their lives with bedding and pillows. No, he chooses the time when the two lads, seated on the bed which is to become their grave, are terrified and trembling by reason of a presentiment of the

footsteps of Death, as yet unrecognised by them, but noted by their dog. Death is approaching, as yet hidden behind the prison door, but his pale and cadaverous light is already creeping in through the chinks.

It is evident that this is one side of art, one aspect of genius, which can be energetically attacked and conscientiously defended. It does not satisfy the artist supremely, but it gives the middle classes considerable pleasure. That is why Delaroche had, for a time, the most universal reputation, and the one that was least disputed among all his colleagues. It also explains why, after having been too indulgent towards him, and from the very fact of being over-indulgent, criticism has become too severe. And this is why we are putting the artist and his works in their true place and light. We say, then: Delaroche must not be so much blamed for his skill as felicitated for it. It is an organic part not merely of his talent, but still more of his temperament and character. He does not look all round his subject to find out from which side he can see it the best. He sees his subject immediately in just that particular pose; and it would be impossible for the painter to realise it in any other way. Along with this, Delaroche puts all the consciousness of which he is capable into his work. Here is yet another point of resemblance between him and Casimir Delavigne; only, he does not pour his whole self out as does Delavigne; he does not need, as does Delavigne, friends to encourage him and give him strength;—he is more prolific: Casimir is cunning; Delaroche is merely freakish. Then, Casimir shortens, contracts and is niggardly. He treats the same subject as does Delaroche; but why does he treat it? Not by any means because the subject is a magnificent one; or because it moves the heart of the masses and stirs up the Past of a People; or because Shakespeare has created a sublime drama from it, but because Delaroche has made a fine picture out of it. Thus the fifteen more or less lengthy acts of Shakespeare become, under the pen of Casimir Delavigne, three short acts; there is no mention whatever of the king's procession, the scene between Richard III. and Queen Anne,

the apparition of the victims between the two armies, the fight between Richard III. and Richmond. Delavigne's three acts have no other aim than to make a tableau-vivant framed in the harlequin hangings of the Théâtre-Français, representing with scrupulous exactitude, and in the manner of a deceptive painting of still-life, the canvas of Delaroche. It happens, therefore, that the drama finds itself great, even as is the Academy, not by any means because of what it possesses, but by what it lacks. Then, although, in the case of both, their convictions or, if you prefer it, their prejudices exceed the bounds of obstinacy and amount to infatuation, Delaroche, being the stronger of the two, rarely giving in, although he does occasionally! while Casimir never does so! To give one instance,—I have said that each great artist has his counterpart in a kindred contemporary art; and I have said that Delaroche resembled Casimir Delavigne. This I maintain. This is so true that Victor Hugo and Delacroix, the two least academic talents imaginable, both had the ambition to be of the Academy. Both competed for it: Hugo five times and Delacroix ten, twelve, fifteen. . . . I cannot count how many times. Very well, you remember what I said before; or rather, lest you should not remember it, I will repeat it. During one of the vacancies in the Academy I took it upon myself to call on some academicians, who were my friends, on Hugo's behalf. One of these calls was in the direction of Menus-Plasirs, where Casimir Delavigne had rooms. I have previously mentioned how fond I was of Casimir Delavigne, and that this feeling was reciprocated. Perhaps it will be a matter for surprise that, being so fond of him, and boasting of his affection for myself, I speak *ill* of him. In the first place, I do not speak *ill* of his talent, I merely state the truth about it. That does not prevent me from liking the man Casimir personally. I speak well of the talent of M. Delaroche, but does that prove that I like him? No, I do not like M. Delaroche; but my friendship for the one and my want of sympathy with the other does not influence my opinion of their talent. It is not for me either to blame or to praise their talent, and I may be per-

mitted both to praise and to blame individuals. I put all these trifles on one side, and I judge their works. With this explanation I return to Casimir Delavigne, who liked me somewhat, and whom I liked much. I had decided to make use of this friendship on behalf of Hugo, whom I loved, and whom I still love with quite a different affection, because admiration makes up at least two kinds of my friendship for Hugo, whilst I have no admiration for Casimir Delavigne at all. So I went to find Casimir Delavigne. I employed all the coaxing which friendship could inspire, all the arguments reason could prompt to persuade him to give his vote to Hugo. He refused obstinately, cruelly and, worse still, tactlessly. It would have been a stroke of genius for Casimir Delavigne to have voted for Hugo. But he would not vote for him. Cleverness, in the case of Casimir Delavigne, was an acquired quality, not a natural gift. Casimir gave his vote to I know not whom—to M. Dupaty, or M. Flourens, or M. Vatout. Well, listen to this. The same situation occurred when Delacroix paid his visits as when Hugo was trying to get himself placed among applicants for the Academy. Once, twice, Delaroche refused his vote to Delacroix. Robert Fleury,—you know that excellent painter of sorrowful situations and supreme anguish, an apparently ideal person to be an impartial appreciator of Delacroix and of Delaroche! Well, Robert Fleury sought out Delaroche and did what I had done in the case of Casimir Delavigne, he begged, implored Delaroche to give his vote to Delacroix. Delaroche at first refused with shudders of horror and cries of indignation; and he showed Robert Fleury to the door. But when he was by himself his conscience began to speak to him; softly at first, then louder and still louder; he tried to struggle against it, but it grew bigger and bigger, like the shadow of Messina's fiancée! He sent for Fleury.

"You can tell Delacroix he has my vote!" he burst out; —"all things considered, he is a great painter."

And he fled to his bed-chamber as a vanquished lion retires into his cave, as the sulky Achilles withdrew into his tent. Now, in exchange for that concession made to his conscience

when it said to him : "You are wrong!" let us show Delaroche's stubbornness when conscience said, "You are right!" Delaroche was not only a great painter, but, as you will see, he was still more a very fine and a very great character.

In 1835, Delaroche, who was commissioned to paint six pictures for the dome of the Madeleine, learnt that M. Ingres, who also had been commissioned to paint the dome, had drawn back from the immense task and retired. He ran off to M. Thiers, then Minister of the Interior.

"Monsieur le Ministre," he said to him, "M. Ingres is withdrawing; my work is bound up with his, I am at one with him concerning it; he discussed his plans with me, and I showed him my sketches; his task and mine were made to harmonise together. It may not be thus with his successor. May I ask who his successor is, in order that I may know whether we can work together as M. Ingres and I have worked together? In case you should not have any person in view, and should wish me to undertake the whole, I will do the dome for nothing, that is to say, you shall pay me the sum agreed upon for my six pictures and I will give you the dome into the bargain."

M. Thiers got up and assumed the attitude of Orosmane, and said as said Orosmane—

> "Chrétien, te serais tu flatté,
> D'effacer Orosmane en générosité?" . . .

The result of the conversation was that the Minister, after having said that there might not perhaps be any dome to paint, and that it was possible they might content themselves with a sculptured frieze, passed his word of honour to Delaroche —the word of honour which you knew, which I knew, which Rome and Spain knew!—that, if the dome of the Madeleine had to be painted, he, Delaroche, should paint it. Upon that assurance Delaroche departed joyously for Rome, carrying with him the hope of his life. That work was to be his life's work, his Sistine Chapel. He reached Rome; he shut himself up, as did Poussin, in a Camaldule monastery, copied monks'

heads, made prodigious studies and admirable sketches—and the sketches of Delaroche are often worth more than his pictures—painted by day, designed by night and returned with huge quantities of material. On his return he learned that the dome was given to Ziégler! Even as I after the interdiction of *Antony*, he took a cab, forced his way to the presence of M. Thiers, found him in his private room, and stopped in front of his desk.

"Monsieur le Ministre, I do not come to claim the work you had promised me; I come to return you the twenty-five thousand francs you advanced me."

And, flinging down the banknotes for that sum upon the Minister's desk, he bowed and went out.

This was dignified, noble and grand! But it was dismal. The unhappiness of Delaroche, let us rather say, his misanthropy, dates from that day.

CHAPTER XI

Eugène Delacroix

EUGÈNE DELACROIX had exhibited in the Salon of 1831 his *Tigres*, his *Liberté*, his *Mort de l'Évêque de Liége*. Notice how well the grave and misanthropic face of Delaroche is framed between Horace Vernet, who is life and movement, and Delacroix, who is feeling, imagination and fantasy. Here is a painter in the full sense of the term, *à la bonne heure!* Full of faults impossible to defend, full of qualities impossible to dispute, for which friends and enemies, admirers and detractors can cut one another's throats in all conscience. And all will have right on their side: those who love him and those who hate him; those who admire, those who run him down. To battle, then! For Delacroix is equally a *fait de guerre* and a *cas de guerre*.

We will try to draw this great and strange artistic figure, which is like nothing that has been and probably like nothing that ever will be; we will try to give, by the analysis of his temperament, an idea of the productions of this great painter, who bore a likeness to both Michael Angelo and Rubens; not so good at drawing as the first, nor as good at composition as the second, but more original in his fancies than either. Temperament is the tree; works are but its flowers and fruit.

Eugène Delacroix was born at Charenton near Paris,—at Charenton-les-Fous; nobody, perhaps, has painted such fools as did he: witness the stupid fool, the timid fool and the angry fool of the *Prison du Tasse*. He was born in 1798, in the full tide of the Directory. His father was first a Minister

during the Revolution, then préfet at Bordeaux, and was later to become préfet at Marseilles. Eugène was the last of his family, the *culot*—the nestling, as bird-nest robbers say; his brother was twenty-five years old when he was born, and his sister was married before he was born. It would be difficult to find a childhood fuller of events than that of Delacroix. At three, he had been hung, burned, drowned, poisoned and strangled! He must have been made very tough by Fate to escape all this alive. One day his father, who was a soldier, took him up in his arms, and raised him to the level of his mouth; meantime the child amused itself by twisting the cord of the cavalryman's forage cap round his neck; the soldier, instead of putting him down on the ground, let him fall, and behold there was Delacroix hung. Happily, they loosened the cord of the cap in time, and Delacroix was saved. One night, his nurse left the candle too near his mosquito net, the wind set the net waving and it caught fire; the fire spread to the bedding, sheets and child's nightshirt, and behold Delacroix was on fire! Happily he cries; and, at his cries people come in, and Delacroix is extinguished. It was high time, the man's back is to this day marked all over with the burns which scarred the child's skin. His father passed from the prefecture of Bordeaux to that of Marseilles, and they gave an inaugural fête to the new préfet in the harbour; while passing from one boat to another, the serving lad who carried the child made a false step, dropped him and there was Delacroix drowning! Luckily, a sailor jumped into the sea and fished him out just when the serving lad, thinking of his own salvation, was about to drop him. A little later, in his father's study, he found some *vert-de-gris* which was used to clean geographical maps; the colour pleased his fancy,—Delacroix has always been a colourist;—he swallowed the *vert-de-gris*, and there he was poisoned! Happily, his father came back, found the bowl empty, suspected what had happened and called in a doctor; the doctor ordered an emetic and freed the child from the poison. Once, when he had been very good, his mother gave him a bunch of dried

grapes; Delacroix was greedy; instead of eating his grapes one by one, he swallowed the whole bunch; it stuck in his throat, and he was being suffocated in exactly the same way as was Paul Huet with the fish bone! Fortunately, his mother stuffed her hand into his mouth up to the wrist, caught hold of the bunch by its stalk, managed to draw it up, and Delacroix, who was choking, breathed again. These various events no doubt caused one of his biographers to say that he had an *unhappy* childhood. As we see, it should rather have been said *exciting*. Delacroix was adored by his father and mother, and it is not an unhappy childhood to grow up and develop surrounded by the love of father and mother. They sent him to school at eight,—to the Lycée Impérial. There he stayed till he was seventeen, making good progress with his studies, spending his holidays sometimes with his father and sometimes with his uncle Riesener, the portrait-painter. At his uncle's house he met Guérin. The craze to be a painter had always stuck to him: at six years old, in 1804, when in the camp at Boulogne, he had made a drawing with white chalk on a black plank, representing the *Descente des Français en Angleterre*; only, France figured as a mountain and England as a valley; and a company of soldiers was descending the mountain into the valley: this was the *descent* into England. Of the sea itself there was no question. We see that, at six years of age, Delacroix's geographical ideas were not very clearly defined. It was agreed upon between Riesener and the composer of *Clymnestre* and *Pyrrhus* that, when Delacroix left college, he should enter the studio of the latter. There were, indeed, some difficulties raised by the family, the father inclining to law, the mother to the diplomatic service; but, at eighteen, Delacroix lost his fortune and his father; he had only forty thousand francs left, and liberty to make himself a painter. He then went to Guérin, as soon as it could be arranged, and, working like a negro, dreamed, composed and executed his picture of *Dante*. This picture, not the worst of those he has painted,—strong men sometimes put as much or even more into their first work as into any afterwards,—came under the

notice of Géricault. The gaze of the young master when in process of painting his *Naufrage de la Méduse* was like the rays of a hot sun. Géricault often came to see the work of Delacroix; the rapidity and original fancy of the brush of his young rival, or, rather, of his young disciple, amused him. He looked over his shoulder—Delacroix is of short and Géricault of tall stature,—or he looked on seated astride a chair. Géricault was so fond of horses that he always sat astride something. When the last stroke of the brush was put to the dark crossing of hell, it was shown to M. Guérin. M. Guérin bit his lips, frowned and uttered a little growl of disapprobation accompanied by a negative shake of the head. And that was all Delacroix could extract from him. The picture was exhibited. Gérard saw it as he was passing by, stopped short, looked at it a long time and that night, when dining with Thiers,—who was making his first campaign in literature, as was Delacroix in painting,—he said to the future Minister—

"We have a new painter!"

"What is his name?"

"Eugène Delacroix."

"What has he done?"

"A *Dante passant l'Achéron avec Virgile.* Go and see his picture."

Next day Thiers goes to the Louvre, seeks for the picture, finds it, gazes at it and goes out entranced.

Intellectually, Thiers possessed genuine artistic feeling, even if it did not spring from the heart. He did what he could for art; and when he displeased, wounded and discouraged an artist, the fault has lain with his environment, his family, or some salon coterie, and, even when causing pain to an artist, and in failing to keep his promises, he did his utmost to spare the artist any pain he may have had to cause him, at the cost of pain to himself. He was lucky, also, in his dealings, if not always just; it was his idea to send Sigalon to Rome. True, Sigalon died there of cholera; but not till after he had sent from Rome his beautiful copy of the *Jugement dernier.* So Thiers went back delighted with Delacroix's picture; he

was then working on the staff of the *Constitutionnel*, and he wrote a splendid article on the new painter. In short, the *Dante* did not raise too much envy. It was not suspected what a family of reprobates the exile from Florence dragged in his wake! The Government bought the picture for two thousand francs, upon the recommendation of Gérard and Gros, and had it taken to the Luxembourg, where it still is. You can see it there, one of the finest pictures in the palace.

Two years flew by. At that time exhibitions were only held every two or three years. The salon of 1824 then opened. All eyes were turned towards Greece. The memories of our young days formed a kind of propaganda, recruiting under its banner, men, money, poems, painting and concerts. People sang, painted, made verses, begged for the Greeks. Whoever pronounced himself a Turkophile ran the risk of being stoned like Saint Stephen. Delacroix exhibited his famous *Massacre de Scio*.

Good Heavens! Have you who belonged to that time forgotten the clamour that picture roused, with its rough and violent style of composition, yet full of poetry and grace? Do you remember the young girl tied to the tail of a horse? How frail and fragile she looked! How easily one could see that her whole body would shed its fragments like the petals of a rose, and be scattered like flakes of snow, when it came in contact with pebbles and boulders and bramble thorns!

Now, this time, the Rubicon was passed, the lance thrown down, and war declared. The young painter had just broken with the whole of the Imperial School. When clearing the precipice which divided the past from the future, his foot had pushed the plank into the abyss below, and had he wished to retrace his steps it was henceforth an impossibility. From that moment—a rare thing at twenty-six years of age!—Delacroix was proclaimed a master, started a school of his own, and had not only pupils but disciples, admirers and fanatical worshippers. They hunted out someone to stand in opposition to him; they exhumed the man who was least like him in all points, and rallied round him; they discovered Ingres, exalted

him, proclaimed him and crowned him in their hatred of Delacroix. As in the age of the invasion of the Huns, the Burgundians and the Visigoths, they called upon the savages to help them, they invoked St. Geneviève, they adjured the king, they implored the pope! Ingres, certainly, did not owe his revived reputation to the love and admiration which his grey monochromes inspired, but to the fear and hatred which were inspired by the flashing brush of Delacroix. All men above the age of fifty were for Ingres; all young people below the age of thirty were for Delacroix.

We will study and examine and appreciate Ingres in his turn, never fear! His name, flung down in passing, shall not remain in obscurity; although we warn our readers beforehand —and let them now take note and only regard our judgment for what it is worth—that we are not in sympathy with either the man or his talents.

Thiers did not fail the painter of the *Massacre de Scio*, any more than he had failed the creator of *Dante*. Quite as eulogistic an article as the first, and a surprising one to find in the columns of the classic *Constitutionnel*, came to the aid of Delacroix in the battle where, as in the times of the *Iliad*, the gods of art were not above fighting like ordinary mortals. The Government had its hands forced, in some measure, by Gérard, Gros and M. de Forbin. The latter bought the *Massacre de Scio* in the name of the king for six thousand francs for the Luxembourg Museum.

Géricault died just when Delacroix received his six thousand francs. Six thousand francs! It was a fortune. The fortune was spent in buying sketches at the sale of the famous dead painter's works, and in making a journey to England. England is the land of fine private collections, the immense fortunes of certain gentlemen permitting them—either because it is the fashion or from true love of art—to satisfy their taste for painting.

Delacroix bethought himself once more of the Old Museum Napoléon, the museum which the conquest had overthrown in 1818; it abounded in Flemish and Italian art. That old

museum was a wonderful place, with its collection of masterpieces from all over Europe, and in the midst of which the English cooked their raw meat after Waterloo.

It was during this period of prosperity—public talk about art always signifies prosperity; if it does not lead to fortune, it gratifies pride, and gratified pride assuredly brings keener joy than the acquiring of a fortune;—it was during this period of prosperity, we repeat, that Delacroix painted his first *Hamlet*, his *Giaour*, his *Tasse dans la prison des fous*, his *Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi* and *Marino Faliero*. I bought the first three pictures; they are even now the most beautiful Delacroix painted. The *Grèce* was bought by a provincial museum. *Marino Faliero* had a singular fate. Criticism was furious against this picture. Delacroix would have sold it, at the time, for fifteen or eighteen hundred francs; but nobody wanted it. Lawrence saw it, appreciated it, wished to have it and was about to purchase it when he died. The picture remained in Delacroix's studio. In 1836, I was with the Prince Royal when he was going to send Victor Hugo a snuff-box or a diamond ring or something or other, I forget what, in thanks for a volume of poetry addressed by the great poet to Madame la duchesse d'Orléans. He showed me the object in question, and told me of its destination, letting me understand that I was threatened with a similar present.

"Oh! Monseigneur, for pity's sake!" I said to him, "do not send Hugo either a ring or snuff-box."

"Why not?"

"Because that is what every prince does, and Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, my own particular Duc d'Orléans, is not like other princes; he is himself a man of intellect, a sincere man and an artist."

"What would you have me send him, then?"

"Take down some picture from your gallery, no matter how unimportant a one, provided it has belonged to your Highness. Put underneath it, 'Given by the Prince Royal to Victor Hugo,' and send him that."

"Very well, I will. Better still, hunt out for me among your artist friends a picture which will please Hugo; buy it, have it sent to me, I will give it him. Then two people will be pleased instead of one; the painter from whom I buy it, and the poet to whom I give it."

"I will do what you wish, Monseigneur," I said to the prince.

I took my hat and ran out. I thought of Delacroix's *Marino Faliero*. I crossed bridges, I climbed the one hundred and seventeen steps to Delacroix's studio, who then lived on the quai Voltaire, and I fell into his studio utterly breathless.

"Hullo!" he said to me. "Why the deuce do you come upstairs so fast?"

"I have good news to give you."

"Good!" exclaimed Delacroix; "what is it?"

"I have come to buy your *Marino Faliero*."

"Ah!" he said, sounding more vexed than pleased.

"What! Are you not delighted!"

"Do you want to buy it for yourself?"

"If it were for myself, what would the price be?"

"Whatever you like to give me: two thousand francs, fifteen hundred francs, one thousand francs."

"No, it is not for myself; it is for the Duc d'Orléans. How much for him?"

"Four, five, six thousand francs, according to the gallery in which he will place it."

"It is not for himself."

"For whom?"

"It is for a present."

"To whom?"

"I am not authorised to tell you; I am only authorised to offer you six thousand francs."

"My *Marino Faliero* is not for sale."

"Why is it not for sale? Just now you would have given it me for a thousand francs."

"To you, yes."

"To the prince for four thousand!"

"To the prince, yes; but only to the prince or you."

"Why this choice?"

"To you, because you are my friend; to the prince, because it is an honour to have a place in the gallery of a royal artist as intelligent as he is; but to any one else save you two, no."

"Oh! what an extraordinary notion!"

"As you like! It is my own."

"But, really, you must have a better reason."

"Very likely."

"Would you sell any other picture for which you could get the same price?"

"Any other, but not that one."

"And why not this one?"

"Because I have been told so often that it is bad that I have taken an affection for it, as a mother loves her poor, weakly, sickly deformed child. In my studio, poor pariah that it is! it stands for me to look it in the face when people look askance at it; to comfort it when people humiliate it; to defend it when it is attacked. With you, it would have at all events a guardian, if not a father; for, if you were to buy it, it would be because you love it, as you are not a rich man. In the case of the prince, in place of sincere praise there would be that of courtiers: 'The painting is good, because Monseigneur has bought it. Monseigneur is too much of an artist and a connoisseur to make a mistake. Criticism must be at fault, the old witch! Detestable old Sibyl!' But in the hands of a stranger, an indifferent person, whom it cost nothing and who had no reason for taking its part, no, no, no. My poor *Marino Faliero*, do not be anxious, thou shalt not go!"

And it was in vain that I begged and prayed and urged him; Delacroix stuck to his word. Certain that the Duc d'Orléans should not think my action wrong, I went as far as eight thousand francs. Delacroix obstinately refused. The picture is still in his studio. That was just like the man, or, rather, the artist!

At the Salon of 1826, which lasted six months, and was three times replenished, Delacroix exhibited a *Justinien* and *Christ au jardin des Oliviers*, wonderful for their pain and sadness; they can now be seen in the rue Saint-Antoine and the Church of St. Paul on the right as you enter. I never miss going into the church when I pass that way, to make my oblation as a Christian and an artist should before the picture. All these subjects were wisely chosen; and as they were beautiful and not bizarre they did not raise a stir. People indeed said that *Justinien* looked like a bird, and the *Christ*, like . . . some thing or other; but they were harking back more to the past than the present. But, suddenly, at the final replenishing, arrived . . . what? Guess . . . Do you not remember?—No—The *Sardanapale*. Ah! so it did! This time there was a general hue-and-cry.

The King of Assyria, his head wrapped round with a turban, clad in royal robes, sitting surrounded with silver vases and golden water-jugs, pearl collars and diamond bracelets, bronze tripods with his favourite, the beautiful Mirrha, upon a pile of faggots, which seemed like slipping down and falling on the public. All round the pile, the wives of the Oriental monarch were killing themselves, whilst the slaves were leading away and killing his horses. The attack was so violent, criticism had so many things to find fault with in that enormous canvas—one of the largest if not the largest in the Salon—that the attack drowned defence: his fanatical admirers tried indeed to rally in square of battle about their chief; but the Academy itself, the Old Guard of *Classicism*, charged determinedly; the unlucky partizans of *Sardanapale* were routed, scattered and cut to pieces! They disappeared like a water-spout, vanished like smoke, and, like Augustus, Delacroix called in vain for his legions! Thiers had hidden himself, nobody knew where. The creator of *Sardanapale*,—it goes without saying that Delacroix was no longer remembered as the painter of *Dante*, of the *Massacre de Scio* or of *Grèce sur les ruines de Missolongi*, or of *Christ au jardin des Oliviers*, no, he was the creator of *Sardanapale* and of no other work whatever!—was for five years

without an order. Finally, in 1831, as we have already said, he exhibited his *Tigres*, his *Liberté* and his *Assassinat de l'Évêque de Liége*, and, round these three most remarkable works, those who had survived the last defeat began to rally. The Duc d'Orléans bought the *Assassinat de l'Évêque de Liége*, and the government, the *Liberté*. The *Tigres* remained with its creator.

CHAPTER XII

Three portraits in one frame

NOW—judging by myself at least—next to the appreciation of the work of great men, that which rouses the most curiosity is their method of working. There are museums where one can study all the phases of human gestation; conservatories where one can almost by the aid of the naked eye alone follow the development of plants and flowers. Tell me, is it not just as curious to watch the varying phenomena of the working of the intellect? Do you not think that it is as interesting to see what is passing in the brain of man, especially if that man be an artist like Vernet, or Delaroché or Delacroix; a scientist like Arago, Humboldt or Berzélius; a poet like Goethe, Hugo or Lamartine, as it is to look through a glass shade and see what is happening inside a bee-hive?

One day I remarked to one of my misanthropic friends that, amongst animals, the brain of the ant most resembled that of man.

"Your statement is not very complimentary to the ant!" replied the misanthrope.

I am not entirely of my friend's way of thinking. I believe, on the contrary, that the brain of man is, of all brains, the most interesting to examine. Now, as it is the brain—so far, at least, as our present knowledge permits us to dogmatise—which creates thought, thought which controls action and action which produces deeds, we can boldly say that to study character, to examine the execution of works which are the productions of temperament, is to study the brain. We have described Horace Vernet's physical appearance: small, thin, slight,

pleasant to look at, good to listen to, with his unusual hair, his thick eyebrows, his blue eyes, his long nose, his smiling mouth beneath its long moustache, and his beard cut to a point. He is, we added, all life and movement. Vernet, at the end of his career, will, indeed, be one who has lived a full life, and, when he stops, he will have gone farthest; thanks to the post, to horses, camels, steamboats and the railroad, he has certainly, by now (and he is sixty-five), travelled farther than the Wandering Jew! True, the Wandering Jew goes on foot, his five sous not permitting him rapid ways of locomotion, and his pride declining gratuitous locomotion. Vernet, we say, had already travelled farther than the Wandering Jew had done in a thousand years; his work itself is a sort of journey: we saw him paint the *Smala* with a scaffold mounting as high as the ceiling and terraces extending the whole length of the room; it was curious to see him, going, coming, climbing up, descending, only stopping at each station for five minutes, as one stops at Osnières for five minutes, at Creil for ten minutes and at Valenciennes for half an hour—and, in the midst of all this, gossiping, smoking, fencing, riding on horseback, on mules, on camels, in tilburys, in droschkys, in palanquins, relating his travels, planning fresh ones, impalpable, becoming apparently almost invisible: he is flame, water, smoke—a Proteus! Then there was another odd thing about Vernet: he would start for Rome as he would set out for Saint-Germain; for China as if for Rome. I have been at his house six or seven times; the first time he was there—the oddness of the thing fascinated me; the second time he was in Cairo; the third, in St. Petersburg; the fourth, in Constantinople; the fifth, in Warsaw; and the sixth, in Algiers. The seventh time—namely, the day before yesterday—I found him at the Institute, where he had come after following the hunt at Fontainebleau, and was giving himself a day's rest by varnishing a little eighteen-inch picture representing an Arab astride an ass with a still bleeding lion-skin for saddle-cloth, which had just been taken from the body of the animal; doing it in as sure and easy a manner as though he were but thirty. The ass is crossing a stream, unconscious

of the terrible burden it bears, and one can almost hear the stream prattling over the pebbles; the man, with his head in the air, looks absently at the blue sky which appears through the leaves; the flowers with their glowing colours twining up the tree-trunks and falling down like trumpets of mother-of-pearl or purple rosettes. This Arab, Vernet had actually come across, sitting calm and indifferent upon his ass, fresh from killing and skinning the lion. This is how it had happened. The Arab was working in a little field near a wood;—a wood is always a bad neighbour in Algeria;—a slave woman was sitting twenty paces from him, with his child. Suddenly, the woman uttered a cry . . . A lion was by her side. The Arab flew for his gun, but the woman shouted out to him—

"Let me alone!"

I am mistaken, it was not a slave woman, but the mother who called out thus. He let her alone. She took her child, put it between her knees and, turning to the lion, she said to it, shaking her fist at the animal—

"Ah, you coward! to attack a defenceless woman and child! You think to terrify me; but I know you. Go and attack my husband instead, who is down there with a gun . . . Go, I tell you! You dare not; you wretch! It is you who are afraid! Go, you jackal! Off with you, you wolf, you hyæna! You have a lion's skin on your back but you are no lion!"

The lion withdrew, but, unfortunately, it met the Arab's mother, who was bringing him his dinner. It leapt on the old woman and began to eat her. At the cries of his mother the Arab ran up with his gun, and, whilst the lion was quietly cracking the bones and flesh with its teeth, he put the muzzle of his gun into the animal's ear and killed it outright. In conclusion, the Arab did not seem to be any the sadder for being an orphan, or in better spirits for having killed a lion. Vernet told me this whilst putting the finishing touches to his picture, which ought to be completed by now.

Delaroche worked in a very different way; he led no such adventurous life; he had not too much time for his work.

With Delaroche, work is a constant study and not a game. He was not a born painter, like Vernet; he did not play with brushes and pencils as a child; he learnt to draw and to paint, whilst Vernet never learnt anything of the kind. Delaroche is a man of fifty-six, with smooth hair, once black and now turning grey, a broad bare forehead, dark eyes fuller of intelligence than of vivacity, and no beard or whiskers. He is of middle height, well-set up, even to gracefulness; his movements are slow, his speech is cold; words and actions, one clearly feels, are subjected to reflection, and, instead of being spontaneous, like Vernet's, only come, so to speak, as the result of thought. Just as Vernet's life is turbulent, emotional and, like a leaf, carried unresistingly by the wind that blows, so the life of Delaroche, of his own free will, was tranquil and sedentary. Every time Delaroche went a journey,—and he went very few, I believe,—it was necessity which compelled him to leave his studio: it was some real, serious, artistic business which called him away. Wherever he goes, he stays, plants himself down and takes root, and it costs him as much pain to go back as it did to come. No one could less resemble Vernet in his method of working than Delaroche. Vernet knows all his sitters through and through, from the aigrette on the schako to the gaiter-buttons. He has so often lived under a tent, that its cords and piquets are familiar objects to him; he has seen and ridden and drawn so many horses, that he knows every kind of harness, from the rough sheep-skin of the Baskir to the embroidered and jewel-bespangled saddle-cloths of the pacha. He has, therefore, hardly any need of preparatory studies, no matter what his subject may be. He scarcely sketches them out beforehand: *Constantine* cost him an hour's work; the *Smala*, a day. Furthermore, what he does not know, he guesses. It is quite the reverse with Delaroche. He hunts a long time, hesitates a great deal, composes slowly; Vernet only studies one thing, the locality; this is why, having painted nearly all the battlefields of Europe and of Africa, he is always riding over hill and dale, and travelling by rail and by boat.

Delaroche, on the contrary, studies everything: draperies, clothing, flesh, atmosphere, light, half-tones, all the effects of Delaroche are laboured, calculated, prepared; Vernet's are done on the spur of the moment. When Delaroche is pondering on a picture, everything is laid under contribution by him: the library for engravings, museums for pictures, old clothes' shops for draperies; he tires himself out with making rough sketches, exhausts himself in first attempts, and often puts his finest talent into a sketch. A certain feeling of laboriousness in the picture is the result of this preparatory fatigue, which, however, is a virtue and not a fault in the eyes of industrious people.

Like all men of transition periods Delaroche was bound to have great successes, and he has had them. During the exhibitions of 1826, 1831 and 1834, everyone, before venturing to go to the Salon, asked, "Has M. Delaroche exhibited?" But from the period, the intermediate year, in which he united the classical school of painting with the romantic, the past with the future, David with Delacroix, people were unjust to him, as they are towards all who live in a state of transition. Besides, Delaroche does not exhibit any longer; he scarcely even works now. He has done one composition of foremost excellence, his hemicycle of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, and that composition, which, in 1831, was run after by the whole of Paris and annoyed most artists. Why? Has Delaroche's talent become feebler since the time when people stood in rows before his pictures and fought in front of his paintings? No, on the contrary, he has improved; he has become more elevated and masterly. But, what would you expect! I have compared Paul Delaroche with Casimir Delavigne, and the same thing happened to the poet as to the painter; only, with this difference, that the genius of the poet had decreased, whilst that of the painter not only did not remain stationary, but went on progressing constantly. At the present time, one needs to be among the most intimate of the friends of Delaroche to have the right to enter his studio. Besides, he is not even any longer in Paris: he is at Nice; he is said to be

ill. Hot sun, beautiful starlit nights, an atmosphere sparkling with fireflies, will cure the soul, and then the body will soon be cured! . . .

There is no sort of physical resemblance between Delacroix and his two rivals. He is like Vernet in figure, almost as slender as he, very neat and fashionable and dandified. He is fifty-five years old, his hair, whiskers and moustache, are as dark as when he was thirty; his hair waves naturally, his beard is scanty, and his moustache, a little bristly, looks like two wisps of tobacco; his forehead is broad and prominent, with two thick eyebrows below, over small eyes, which flash like fire between the long black eyelashes; his skin is brown, swarthy, mobile and wrinkled like that of a lion; his lips are thick and sensual, and he smiles often, showing teeth as white as pearls. All his movements are quick, rapid, emphatic; his words are pictures, his gestures speaking; his mind is subtle, argumentative, quick at repartee; he loves a discussion, and is ever ready with some fresh, sparkling, telling and brilliant hit; although of an adventurous, fanciful, erratic talent, at the same time he is wise, temperate in his use of paradox, even classical; one might say that Nature, which tends to equilibrium, has posed him as a clever coachman, reins well in hand, to restrain those two fiery steeds called imagination and fancy. His mind at times overflows its bounds; speech becomes inadequate, his hand drops the brush, incapable of expressing the theory it wishes to uphold, and seizes the pen. Then those whose business it is to make phrases and style and appreciate the value of words are amazed at the artist's facility in constructing sentences, in handling style, in bringing out his points; they forget the *Dante*, the *Massacre de Scio*, the *Hamlet*, the *Tasso*, the *Giaour*, the *Évêque de Liége*, the *Femmes d'Alger*, the frescoes of the Chamber of Deputies, the ceiling of the Louvre; they regret that this man, who writes so well and so easily and so correctly, is not an author. Then, immediately, one remembers that many can write like Delacroix, but none can paint as he does, and one is ready to snatch the pen from his hand in a movement of terror.

Delacroix holds the middle course between Vernet and Delaroche as regards rapidity of working: he works up his sketches more carefully than the former, less so than the latter. He is incontestably superior to both as a colourist, but strikingly inferior in form. He sees the colour of flesh as violet, and, in the matter of form, he sees rather the ugly than the beautiful; but his ugliness is always made poetical by deep feeling. Entirely different from Delaroche, he is attracted by extremes. His struggles are terrible, his battles furious; all the suppleness and strength and extraordinary movements of the body are drawn on his canvas, and he even adds thereto, like a strange varnish which heightens the vivid qualities of his picture, a certain automatic impossibility which does not in the least disconcert him. His fighters seem actually to be fighting, strangling, biting, tearing, hacking, cleaving one another in two and pounding one another about; his swords are broken in two, his axes bloody, his heaps of bodies damp with crushed brains. Look at the *Bataille de Taillebourg*, and you will have an idea of the strength of his genius: you can hear the neighing of the horses, the shouts of men, the clashing of steel. You will find it in the great gallery of Versailles; and, although Louis-Philippe curtailed the canvas by six inches all round because the measurement had been incorrectly given, mutilated as it is, dishonoured by being forced into M. Fontaines' Procustes' bed, it still remains one of the most beautiful, perhaps the most beautiful, of all the pictures in the whole gallery.

At this moment, Delacroix is doing a ceiling at the Hôtel de Ville. He leaves his home at daybreak and only returns to it at night. Delacroix belongs to that rugged family of workers which has produced Raphael and Rubens. When he gets home, he takes a pen and makes sketches. Formerly, Delacroix used to go out into society a great deal, where he was a great favourite; a disease of the larynx has compelled him to retire into private life. Yesterday I went to see him at midnight. He was in a dressing-gown, his neck wrapped in a woollen cravat, at work close to a big fire, which made the

temperature of the room 30°.[1] I asked to see his studio by lamplight. We passed through a corridor crowded with dahlias, agapanthus lilies and chrysanthemums; then we entered the studio. The absence of the master, who had been working at the other end of Paris for six months, had made itself felt; yet there were four splendid canvases, two representing flowers and two fruit. I thought from a distance that these were pictures borrowed by Delacroix from Diaz. That was why there were so many flowers in the anteroom. Then, after the flowers, which to me were quite fresh, I saw a crowd of old friends hanging on the walls: *Chevaux anglais qui se mordent dans une prairie*, a *Grèce qui traverse un champ de bataille au galop*, the famous *Marino Faliero*, faithful companion of the painter's sad moods, when he has such moods; and, last, by itself, in a little room at the side of the great studio, a scene from *Goetz von Berlichingen*. We parted at two o'clock in the morning.

[1] 30° Cent. = 85° Fahr.

CHAPTER XIII

Collaboration—A whim of Bocage—Anicet Bourgeois—*Teresa*—Drama at the Opéra-Comique—Laferrière and the eruption of Vesuvius—Mélingue—Fancy-dress ball at the Tuileries—The place de Grève and the barrière Saint-Jacques—The death penalty

DURING the interval which had elapsed between the construction of *Richard Darlington* and its first performance, I had blocked out another play entitled *Teresa*. I have said what I thought of *Charles VII.*; I hope that my collaborator Anicet will allow me to say the same in the case of *Teresa*. I have no wish to defer expressing my opinion upon this drama: it is one of my very worst, as *Angèle*, also done in collaboration with Anicet, is one of my best. The evil of a first collaboration is that it leads to a second; the man who has once collaborated is comparable to one who lets his finger-end be entrapped in a rolling press: after the finger the hand goes, then the arm and, finally, his whole body! Everything is drawn in—one goes in a man and one comes out a bit of iron wire.

One day Bocage came to see me with a singular idea in his head. As he had just played a man of thirty, in the character of Antony, he had got it into his head that he would do well to play an old man of sixty; it mattered little to him what manner of man it might be. The old man in *Hernani* and in *Marion Delorme* rose up before him during his sleep and haunted him in his waking hours: he wanted to play an old man, were it Don Diègue in the *Cid*, Joad in *Athalie* or Lusignan in *Zaïre*. He had found his old man out at nurse with Anicet Bourgeois; he came to fetch me to be foster-father. I did not know Anicet; we became acquainted on this matter and at this time. Anicet had written the plan of *Teresa*. I

began by laying aside the written sketch and begging him to relate me the play. There is something more living and life-like about a told story. To me a written plot is like a corpse, not a living thing; one may galvanise it but not give it life. Most of the play as it stands to-day was in Anicet's original plan. I was at once conscious of two things, the second of which caused me to overlook the first: namely, that I could never make *Teresa* anything more than a mediocre play, but that I should do Bocage a good turn. And this is how I did Bocage that service.

Harel, as we have said, had gone from the management of the Odéon to that of the Porte-Saint-Martin. He had Frédérick, Lockroy, Ligier: Bocage was no use to him. So he had broken with him, and, in consequence of this rupture, Bocage found himself without an engagement. Liberty, in the case of an actor, is not always a gift of the gods. Bocage was anxious to put an end to this as soon as possible, and, thanks to my drama, he hoped soon to lose his liberty. That is why he treated *Teresa* so enthusiastically as a *chef d'œuvre*. I have ever been less able to resist unspoken arguments than spoken ones. I understood the situation. I had had need of Bocage; he had played Antony admirably, and by so doing had rendered me eminent service: I could now do him a good turn, and I therefore undertook to write *Teresa*. Not that *Teresa* was entirely without merit as a work. Besides the three artificial characters of Teresa, Arthur and Paolo, there were two excellent parts, those of Amélie and Delaunay. Amélie is a flower from the same garden as Miranda in *The Tempest*, Thekla in *Wallenstein* and Claire in *Comte d'Egmont*; she is young, chaste and beautiful, and, at the same time, natural and poetic; she passes through the play with her bouquet of orange blossom at her side, her betrothal veil on her head, in the midst of the ignoble incestuous passion of Arthur and Teresa, without guessing or suspecting or understanding anything of it. She is like a crystal statue which cannot see through others but lets others see through it. Delaunay is a fine type, a little too much copied from Danville in the *École de Vieillards*, and from Duresnel in the *Mère et la*

Fille. However—one must be just to everyone, even to oneself,—there are two scenes in his part which reach to the greatest heights of beauty to be met with on the stage: the first is where he insults Arthur, when the secret of the adultery is revealed to him; the second is where, learning that his daughter is *enciente*, and not desiring to make the mother a widow and the child an orphan, he makes excuses to his son-in-law. The drama was begun and almost finished in three weeks or a month; but I made the same condition with Anicet which I have always made when working in collaboration, namely, that I alone should write the play. When the drama was completed, Bocage took it, and we did not trouble our heads further about it. For three weeks or a month I did not see Bocage again. At the end of that time he came to me.

"Our business is settled," he said.

"Good! And how?"

"Your play is received in advance; you are to have a premium of a thousand francs upon its reading, and it is to be played immediately."

"Where?"

"At the Opéra-Comique."

I thought I must have misunderstood. "What?" I said.

"At the Opéra-Comique," repeated Bocage.

"Oh! that's a fine tale! Who made that up?"

"They are engaging the actors."

"Who are they?"

"Myself, in the first place."

"You do not play the drama all alone?"

"Then there is Laferrière."

"You two will not play it by yourselves?"

"Then a talented young girl who is at Montmartre."

"What is her name?"

"Oh! you will not even know her name; she is called Ida; she is just beginning."

"And then?"

"Then a young man recommended to me by your son."

"What! By my son? At six and a half years of age my son make recommendations of that sort?"

"It is his tutor."

"I see; he wants to get rid of him. But if that one leaves he will have another. Such is the simplicity of childhood! And what is the name of my son's tutor?"

"Guyon. He is a tall fellow of five foot six, with dark hair and eyes, and a magnificent head! He will make us a superb Paolo."

"So much for Paolo? Next?"

"Next we shall have the Opéra-Comique company, from which we can help ourselves freely. They sing."

"They sing, you are pleased to say; but can they speak?"

"That is your affair."

"So, is it settled like that?"

"If you approve. Are you agreeable?"

"Perfectly."

"Then we are to read it to the actors to-morrow."

"Let us do so."

Next day I read it to the actors; two days later the play was put in rehearsal. I knew Laferrière only slightly; but he had already at that period, when less used to the stage, the elements of talent to which he owed his reputation later as the first actor in love-scenes to be found between the Porte-Saint-Denis and the Colonne de Juillet. Mademoiselle Ida had a delicate, graceful, artless style, quite unaffected by any theatrical convention. Bocage was the man we know, endowed with youth, that excellent and precious fault, which is never injurious even in playing the parts of old men. So we were in the full tide of rehearsal, when the year 1832 began and the newspapers of 1 January announced a fearful eruption of Vesuvius.

I was considerably surprised to receive a visit from Laferrière with a newspaper in his hand, on the 7th or 8th. He was as much out of breath as I was the day I went to Delacroix to buy his *Marino Faliero*.

"Hullo!" I said to him, "is the Opéra-Comique burnt down?"

"No, but *Torre-del-Grèco* is burning."

"It ought to be used to it by now, for, if I mistake not, it has been rebuilt eleven times!"

"It must be a magnificent sight!"

"Do you happen to want to start for Naples?"

"No; but you might derive profit from it."

"How?"

"Read."

He handed me his newspaper, which contained a description of the latest eruption of Vesuvius.

"Well?" I said to him when I had read it.

"Well, do you not think that superb?"

"Magnificent!"

"Put that in my part then. Run your show with Vesuvius; the play would gain by it."

"And your rôle likewise."

"Of course!"

"You infernal mountebank; what an idea!"

Laferrière began to laugh.

There are two men who possess a great advantage for authors in two very different functions, with two very different types of talent: Laferrière is the one, and Mélingue the other. From the very hour when they have first listened to the reading of a work, to the moment when the curtain goes up, they have but one thought: to collect, weld together and work in anything that might be useful to the work. Their searching eyes are not distracted for one instant; not for a second do their minds wander from the point. They think of their parts while they are walking, eating and drinking; they dream of them while they sleep. I shall return to Mélingue more than once in reference to this quality, one of the most precious a great actor can possess.

Laferrière has plenty of pertinacity.

"Well," I said to him, "it is a good idea and I will adopt it."

"Will you really?"

"Yes."

"You promise me?"

"I promise you."

"Very well then . . ."

"What?"

"It is all the same to you . . ."

"Say on."

"You will do it . . ."

"Immediately?"

"Yes."

"Now, at once?"

"I beseech you."

"I have not time."

"Oh! mon petit Dumas! Do me my Vesuvius. I promise you, if you will do it to-day I will know it by to-morrow."

"Once more I tell you I haven't time."

"How long would it take you to do it?"

"How long?"

"Ten minutes . . . come, that is all. . . . I entreat you!"

"Go to the deuce with you!"

"Mon petit Dumas! . . ."

"All right, we will see."

"You are kind!"

"Give me a pen, ink and paper."

"Here they are! . . . No, do not get up: I will bring the table up to you . . . Come, is it comfortable like that?"

"Splendid! Now, go away and come back in a quarter of an hour."

"Oh! what will you be up to when I am gone?"

"I cannot work when anybody is with me. Even my dog disturbs me."

"I will not stir, mon petit Dumas! I will not utter one word; I will keep perfectly still."

"Then go and sit before the glass, button up your coat, put on a gloomy look and pass your hand through your hair."

"Certainly."

"And I will do my part of the work."

A quarter of an hour later, Vesuvius was making an eruption in Laferrière's part, and he took himself off in great glee and pride.

All things considered, the race of players are a good sort! A trifle ungrateful, at times; but has not our friend Roqueplan proclaimed the principle that "ingratitude is the independence of the heart? . . ."

At this time, people were tremendously taken up with a forthcoming event, as they were with everything of an artistic nature. King Louis-Philippe was giving a fancy-dress ball. Duponchel had been ordered to design the historic costumes; and people begged, prayed and implored for invitations. It was a splendid ball. All the political celebrities were present; but, as always happens, all the artistic and literary celebrities were absent.

"Will you do something which shall surpass the Tuileries ball?" said Bocage to me.

"What is that?"

"Give one yourself!"

"I! Who would come to it?"

"First of all, those who did not go to King Louis-Philippe's, then those who do not belong to the Académy. It seems to me that the guests I offer you are quite distinguished enough."

"Thanks, Bocage, I will think about it."

I thought about it to some purpose, and the result of my reflections will be seen in one of our forthcoming chapters.

On the 23rd of the month of January,—the next day but one after the anniversary of the death of King Louis XVI.,—the usual place for executions was changed from the place de Grève to the barrière Saint-Jacques. This was one step in advance in civilisation: let us put it down here, by quoting the edict of M. de Bondy.

"We, a peer of France, Préfet de la Seine, etc.; In view of the letter addressed to us by M. le Procureur-general at the Royal Court of Paris:

"Whereas the place de Grève can no longer be used as a place of execution, since the blood of devoted citizens was gloriously spilled there in the national cause: whereas it is important to choose, if possible, a place farther removed from the centre of Paris, yet which shall be easily accessible: whereas, for different reasons, the place situated at the extremity of the rue du faubourg Saint-Jacques seems to suit the requisite conditions; we have decided that—

"Criminals under capital punishment shall in future be executed on the ground at the end of the faubourg Saint-Jacques. COMTE DE BONDY"

This is what we wrote on the subject on 26 November 1849, in an epilogue to *Comte Hermann*,—one of our best dramas,—an epilogue not written to be spoken, but to be read, after the fashion of German plays—

"The death penalty, as applied to-day, has already undergone a great modification, not with respect to its final issue, but with regard to the details which precede the last moments of the condemned.

"Twenty years ago, executions still took place in the centre of Paris, at the most stirring hour of the day and before the greatest possible number of spectators. Thus an external means of support was provided for the doomed man against his own weakness. It did not make the sufferer into a repentant criminal, but a species of cynical victor, who, instead of confessing God upon the scaffold, bore testimony against the inadequacy of human justice, which could, indeed, kill the criminal, but was powerless to extinguish the crime.

"Now, it is quite otherwise. A step has been taken towards the abolition of capital punishment, by transporting the instrument of execution almost outside the precincts of the town, choosing the hour when the majority of the inhabitants of Paris are still asleep, only allowing the criminal during his last moments the rare witnesses that chance or excessive curiosity may attract to the scaffold.

"Nowadays, it is left to the priests who devote themselves to the salvation of the souls of the doomed to tell us if they find as much hardness of heart in the journey between Bicêtre and the barrière Saint-Jacques as they used to find in the journey from the Conciergerie to the place de Grève; and

whether there are more tears shed at the foot of the crucifix now, at four o'clock in the morning, than formerly, at four in the afternoon. We firmly believe so. Yes, there are more repentances in the silence and solitude than there ever were in the tumult of the crowd. Now, let us consider that the act of execution, supported by the eager looks of the people, does not correct them or instruct them but only hardens their hearts; let us suppose that the execution takes place in the prison, with priest and executioner as sole witnesses; that, instead of the guillotine,—which, according to Dr. Guillotin, only occasions a feeling of a *slight chill* on the neck, but which, according to Dr. Sue, causes terrible suffering,—the sole means of execution used is electricity, which kills like lightning, or even one of those stupefying poisons which act like sleep; will it not happen that the hearts of the doomed will soften still more in the night and silence and solitude, than in the open air, were it even at four o'clock in the morning, and in the presence of the few witnesses who are present at the execution, but who, few though they be, will none the less say to the criminal's companions, to his prison friends, '*un tel est bien mort*!' that is to say 'such a one died without repenting,' pushing the crucifix away from him?"

Since that time, the guillotine has come still nearer to the condemned man: now, they execute in front of the gates of the prison de la Roquette. It is but a few steps from that to executing inside the prison itself. And to descend from the prison courtyard into the dungeon itself is but a single step!

CHAPTER XIV

The peregrinations of Casimir Delavigne—*Jeanne Vaubernier*—Rougemont—His translation of Cambronne's *mot*—First representation of *Teresa*—Long and short pieces—Cordelier Delanoue and his *Mathieu Luc*—Closing of the Taitbout Hall and arrest of the leaders of the Saint-Simonian cult

WHILST the Opéra-Comique was rehearsing *Teresa*, the Théâtre-Français was preparing for a great occasion. Casimir Delavigne, the dramatic Coriolanus, after having been rejected by the Volscians of the boulevards, with *Marino Faliero* in his hand, instead of falling beneath the dagger of M. de Mongenet, had been received back triumphantly into the Théâtre-Français. The flight, after all, had been but a passing coolness after the immense success of the *École des Vieillards*. Casimir had had a sort of decline; Mademoiselle Mars had not been able to uphold the *Princesse Aurélié*, a kind of Neapolitan imbroglio which everybody has forgotten to-day, happily for the memory of its author. Then the presence of Victor Hugo and myself at the Théâtre-Français annoyed Casimir Delavigne. He well understood that his popularity was only a political one: he possessed neither the lofty poetry of Victor, nor the movement and life of my ignorant and incorrect prose; in a word, he was ill at ease when close to us. He gave vent to a phrase concerning me which well summed up his thought—

"The work that deuced Dumas does is bad; but it prevents people from seeing the goodness of mine."

So he had migrated to the Porte-Saint-Martin, because we were at the Théâtre-Français, and now he returned to the Théâtre-Français because we were at the Porte-Saint-Martin.

He returned to it with one of his mixed works, half classical and half romantic, which do not belong to any sort of school; literary hermaphrodites, which bear the same relation to intellectual productions as, in Natural History, do mules, *i.e.* animals which cannot reproduce themselves, to the ordinary productions of nature: they make a species, but not a race.

The work that Casimir Delavigne brought back to the Théâtre-Français was *Louis XI.*,—according to our opinion, one of his most mediocre dramas, the least studied as history, and one which, engineered by a clever artifice which we will shortly relate, through the frail sickly period of its youth to its maturity, only owes its patent of longevity to the rather egotistic favour accorded by a player who was crazy to play this rôle because it was an unusual type which suited him. Do not be deceived, it is not *Louis XI.* that lives to-day, but Ligier.[1] We will refer again to Casimir Delavigne's drama on the occasion of its first performance.

The first performance of *Teresa* was announced for the 5th or 6th of February. Meanwhile the Odéon gave *Jeanne Vaubernier.* It was thus that certain authors conceived the idea of reviving the name of the *Comtesse du Barry*, that poor woman who was neither worthy of her high prosperity nor her deep misfortune, and who, according to Lamartine's fine expression, dishonoured both the throne and the scaffold. MM. de Rougemont, Laffitte and Lagrange were the authors of *Jeanne Vaubernier.* Rougemont was a clever man who, towards the close of his life, had a strange fate. The *Duchesse de la Vaubalière* brought him a septuagenarian reputation. It was Rougemont who translated the military substantive flung by Cambronne in the face of the English, on the terrible night of Waterloo, into the pompous, redundant and pretentious phrase which has become of European and world-wide fame: "The Guard dies, and does not return!" As far as I can remember, the drama of *Jeanne Vaubernier*—such as it was, with six tableaux, its Zamore, the ungrateful traitor, its prison and its executioner—

[1] See critical analysis of *Louis XI.* in *Études dramatiques.*

was a very poor concern. I have not seen it, and will not therefore discuss it any further. But, from the ghost of this drama, from the fallen statue, from the least broken fragments which could be made to do duty, the authors composed a little comedy in which Madame Dorval's wit was charmingly light. Dear Dorval! I can see her as she was that successful night, a night which, thanks to her, was saved from being a failure: she was enchanted, never suspecting that the comedy of *Jeanne Vaubernier* would be a chain she would have to wear for eighteen months at the Porte-Saint-Martin, from six to eight o'clock in the evening, before the benches which did not fill up until the beginning of the great drama! To Georges—especially after her reconciliation with Dorval—it was to be a matter of keen remorse, this punishment which she inflicted on her rival in expiation of her triumphs, and which compelled her to leave the Porte-Saint-Martin theatre to go and bury herself in the Théâtre-Français.

The day of the first performance of *Teresa* arrived. The confusion of styles, the beginning of drama at the Opéra-Comique, had piqued the curiosity of the public, and people clamoured to get in. I have already said that the thing was not worth the trouble. Laferrière had given me a good idea with his story of Vesuvius; the exhibition was highly applauded. I recollect that when I entered the wings, after the first act, that excellent fellow Nourrit, who had just been praising the description of the town wherein he was to die, threw himself upon my neck in his enthusiasm. The piece unfolded itself slowly, and with a certain majestic dignity, before a select audience. The character of Amélie, which was very well carried out, made a great hit, and did not fail in any of its appearances. Madame Moreau-Sainti was ravishingly beautiful, and as sympathetic as a bad part allowed. Laferrière came and went, warming up the parts taken by others by his own enthusiastic warmth. Bocage was superb. A misfortune happened to the actor recommended by my son. Unfamiliarity with stage-craft had obliged Guyon to give up the part of Paolo to go more deeply into dramatic studies. Féréol had

taken his place; they had added some barcarolle or other for him to sing whilst he was acting, and he played the rest of his rôle singing. Alexandre found himself with two tutors instead of one!

The curtain went up for the fourth act. From that moment the piece was saved; in it are the letter scene between the father and the daughter, and that of the quarrel between the father-in-law and son-in-law. These two scenes are very fine, and produced a great sensation. This fourth act had an amazing triumph. Usually, if the fourth act is a success, it carries the fifth one with it. The first half of the fifth act of *Teresa* is, moreover, remarkable in itself; it is the scene of the excuses between the old man and the young one. It does not become really bad till *Teresa* asks Paolo for poison. All this intriguing between the adulterous woman and the amorous lackey is vulgar, and has not the merit of being really terrible. But the impression of the fourth act and of the first half of the fifth was so vivid that it extended its influence over the imperfections of the *dénoûment*. In short, it was a success great enough to satisfy *amour-propre*, but not to satisfy the claims of art. Bocage was really grand at times. I here pay him my very sincere compliments for what he then performed. He had improved as a comedian, and was then, I think, at the height of his dramatic career. I think so, now I have somewhat outgrown my youthful illusions; I will therefore tell him, in all frankness, at what moment, according to my opinion, he took the wrong road and adopted the fatal system of nervous excitement under the dominion of which he now is.

When the first rage for *Teresa* had passed they made me a proposal to change the play into one of three acts, so that it might become a stock piece. I refused to do it; I did not wish to make a mutilated play out of a defective one. Anicet, who had a half-share in the work, urged me so pressingly that I suggested he should perform the operation himself. He set to work bravely, pruned, cut, curtailed, and one day I was invited by some player or other, whose name I forget, who was coming out in the rôle of Arthur, to go and see the piece

reduced to three acts. I went, and I found it to be more detestable and, strange to say, longer than at first! Lengthiness does not exist on the stage, practically speaking. There are neither long plays nor short; only amusing plays and wearisome ones. The *Mariage de Figaro*, which lasts five hours, is not so long as the *Épreuve nouvelle*, which lasts one hour. The developments of *Teresa* taken away, the play had lost its artistic interest, and, having become more boresome, seemed longer.

One day Cordelier Delanoue came to me looking depressed.

"What is the matter?" I asked him.

"I have just been reading to the Théâtre-Français."

"What!"

"A three-act drama in verse."

"Entitled?"

"*Mathieu Luc.*"

"And they have refused it?"

"No, they have accepted it, subject to correction."

"Did they point out what corrections they wanted?"

"Yes; the piece is too long."

"And they demand curtailment?"

"Exactly! and I have come to read it to you."

"So that I may point them out to you?"

"Yes."

"Read it, then!"

Delanoue began to read his three acts. I followed the play with the greatest attention. I found, whilst he was in the act of reading, a pivot of interest on which the play could advantageously turn, and which he had passed over unnoticed.

"Well?" said he when he had finished.

"They were right: it is too long by a third."

"Then it must be cut down."

"No, on the contrary."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You must turn the play into five acts."

"But when they already think it too long by a third?"

"That is neither here nor there.—Listen."

And I told him how I understood the play. Delanoue re-

constructed his *scenario* under my direction, wrote out his play afresh, read it in five acts to the committee, which had thought it too long in three, and it was received with unanimity. The piece was played in five acts—not at the Théâtre-Français, but, consequent on some revival or other, at the Théâtre de Odéon, and it succeeded honourably without obtaining a great success.

Some days before the performance of *Teresa* an event had happened which engrossed the attention of Paris. We will take the recital of it from the *Globe*, which was in a perfect position for telling the truth in this instance—

"To-day, 22 January, at noon, MM. Enfantin and Olinde Rodrigues, leaders of the Saint-Simonian religion, laid their plans to go to the Taitbout Hall, where they were to preside over the preaching, when a Commissary of Police, escorted by a Municipal Guard, put in an appearance at No. 6 Rue Monsigny, where they lived, to forbid them to go out, and prevented all communication between the house and the outside world, in virtue of the orders which they declared they possessed.

"Meantime M. Desmortiers, *procureur du roi*, and M. Zangiacomi, Examining Magistrate, assisted by two Commissaries of Police and escorted by Municipal Guards and troops of the line, went to the Taitbout Hall. M. Desmortiers signified to M. Barrault, who was in the hall, that the preaching could not take place, and that he had come to enjoin the meeting to break up. The *procureur du roi* immediately appeared in the hall with M. Barrault and there said: 'In the name of the Law and of Article 292 of the Penal Code I have come to close this hall and to seal up all the doors.' The assembly was immediately broken up, and seals were put to the doors of the Taitbout Hall. M. Zangiacomi and M. Desmortiers then repaired to No. 5 (6) Rue Monsigny, where they found MM. Enfantin and Rodrigues; they declared that they were the bearers of two search-warrants, one against M. Enfantin and the other against M. Rodrigues, and that they had come to search the house. They seized M. Enfantin's correspondence, all the account-books and the bills-due books."

Free to-day from the prosecution of MM. Zangiacomi and Desmortiers, the Saint-Simonians are not at all rid of us, and we shall hunt them out again in their retreat at Ménilmontant.

CHAPTER XV

Mély-Janin's *Louis XI.*

THREE days after *Téresa* the *Louis XI.* of Casimir Delavigne was played. I have spoken of Mély-Janin's drama entitled *Louis XI.*, which had deeply impressed Soulié and me in 1827. It had, no doubt, also impressed Casimir Delavigne, who was most sensitive to such impressions. Casimir seemed to have been created and brought into this world to prove that the system of innate ideas is the falsest of philosophical systems. We are about to devote a few lines to the study of the *Louis XI.* of 1827 and that of 1832, Mély-Janin's drama and that of Casimir Delavigne. We do not wish to say that these two men were of the same substance; but, having Walter Scott ostensibly as ally, the journalist found himself, one fine night, a match for the dramatic author. We say *ostensibly*, because Casimir Delavigne did not himself totally scorn alliance with the Scottish bard; only, as Walter Scott was still unpopular in France with many people, because of his *History of Napoleon*, Casimir, in his capacity of *National* poet (it was upon that nationality the fragile pyramid of his talent was specially founded), did not want openly to confess that alliance.

Let us begin with Mély-Janin. At the rising of the curtain one sees a landscape, representing the château of Plessis-les-Tours, a hostelry and a *smiling countryside*, after the fashion of the time. Wherever anything is not copied from Walter Scott we find, as in that *smiling countryside*, a specimen of the style of the Empire. Isabelle, the rich heiress of Croy, is on the stage with her maid of honour, her attendant, her con-

fidential friend; a theatrical device invented to enable one of the principal characters to confide in another a secret which the teller has known for ten years, and with which the general public now becomes acquainted. In ancient tragedy, when this functionary is a man, he is called Euphorbus (?), Arcas or Corasmin; when a woman, she is called Julia, Œnone or Fatima, and bears the innocent title of confidant. Well, Isabelle confides to the woman who accompanies her in her flight that she has come from the court of Burgundy to the court of France because Duke Charles, fearing to see her dispose of her immense wealth, wished to force her to marry either the Comte de Crèvecœur or the Comte de la Marck, nicknamed the Boar of the Ardennes. She informs her (this same Éléonore, who has not left her side for one moment) that she has found protection, safe although not particularly entertaining, in King Louis XI. The sole anxiety she feels is to know if *he*, whom she has not had time to forewarn of her flight, will have the perseverance to follow her, and the skill to find her again. This is a point upon which Éléonore, well informed as she is, cannot instruct her; but, as Éléonore has learnt nearly all she knows and the public all it needs to know, one sees advancing from the distance two men dressed like decent citizens, who come forward in their turn and gossip quite naturally of their affairs in the very place in all France least suitable for the conversation to be held. Isabelle turns round, sees them and says—

"I see the king coming this way; he is accompanied by his crony Martigny. The simplicity of his costume shows that he wishes to keep his incognito. Here he is; let us withdraw."

And Isabelle de Croy and her confidant withdraw to the *garden side*, having seen Louis XI. and his confidant, whom they must see in order that the public may know that Louis XI. and his confidant are about to take part in the scene, whilst Louis XI. and his confidant, who do not need to see Isabelle and her confidant, and who indeed ought not to see them, do not see them.

You may tell me this is not a very accurate reproduction of

the habits of Louis XI., who, after the nature of cats, foxes and wolves, can see in the night on all sides of him and behind, too, and is represented as not able to see things that are in front of him; but I can only reply that this was how the thing was done on the French stage in the year of grace 1827, even amongst poets who had the reputation of being innovators. It will be seen that things had not changed much in 1832. The hatred which was entertained against us can easily be imagined, since we had undertaken to change customs as convenient as these. It was enough to add in parentheses, and in another style of typography, when speaking of those who come on—as Mély-Janin does, for instance, when speaking of the king and his crony Martigny—(*They come on from the back of the stage, and cannot perceive the comtesse and Éléonore hidden by the trees*). The matter was no more difficult than that! Do not forget, if I do, to remind me of the story of the monologue of Tasso. Louis XI. is also with his confidant, only his confidant is called *le compère* Martigny. They come forward, chatting and disputing; but do not be anxious, they have kept the most important part of their conversation, that which it is urgent the public should know, until their entrance upon the stage; so, after a few unimportant words, exchanged between Louis XI. and his crony, the king says to Martigny—

"Let us return to the business we have in hand. What news have the secret emissaries you sent to the court of Burgundy brought you? Does Charles know that the Comtesse de Croy has withdrawn into my States? Does he know that I have given her shelter?"

You see that the old fox Louis XI. wants the emissaries of the crony Martigny to have informed their master, in order that it may be repeated to himself, that the Duc de Bourgogne knows that the Comtesse de Croy has withdrawn to his States, and that he has given her shelter! As if Louis XI. had need of the emissaries of others! As if he hadn't his own secret spies, who, at all hours, made their way, under all sorts of disguises, noiseless, into his private cabinet, where they were accustomed to talk of his affairs! You must clearly

understand that the two interlocutors would not have come there if the secret emissaries of the crony Martigny had not arrived. As a matter of fact, they have returned, and this is the news they have brought: Charles the Bold knows all; he flew into a violent passion when he learnt it; he sent the Comte de Crèvecoeur immediately to fetch back Isabelle. They have learnt, besides, that a young Scotsman, by name Quentin Durward, has joined the two suitors who aspire to the hand of Isabelle, the Comte de Crèvecoeur and the Boar of Ardennes, and has the advantage over them by being loved in return.

"But where, then, has he seen the countess?"

Wait! Here is a clever ruse, which prepares us for the *dénoûment*—

"That is what I cannot find out," replies Martigny; "it is certain, however, that he has paid her frequent visits at Herbert's tower."

"At Herbert's tower, sayest thou?"

"Yes; you know that the countess, before surrendering herself to the protection of your court, had already made an attempt to escape. The duke, under the first impulse of anger, had her shut up in Herbert's tower; there she was strictly guarded, and yet they say that, by some secret passage, Quentin Durward found means to get to her."

Louis XI. does not know this; and, as he is no doubt ashamed of not knowing it, instead of replying to Martigny's question, he says—

"But hast thou not tried to attract this young man to my court?"

"He had left that of the Duc de Bourgogne some time after the countess."

"He will, no doubt, follow in her track."

As you see, Louis XI. is really much more subtle than he appears. He continues—

"Martigny, we must watch for his arrival. If he comes, my favour awaits him . . . But what art thou looking at?"

You, I presume, who are not Louis XI., have no doubt what crony Martigny is looking at? Why! he is looking towards

the young man for whom the king's favours are waiting. This is called *ad eventum festinare*, moving towards the *dénoûment*; it is recommended in the first place by Horace, and in the second by Boileau. Thanks to his disguise, and to a breakfast which he offers to the traveller, Louis XI. learns that he who has just come is, indeed, the man he is looking for, that his name is Quentin Durward, that he is a Scot; that is to say, as nobly born as a king, as poor as a Gascon, and proud, upon my faith! as proud as himself. The old king, indeed, gets some wild cat scratches from time to time; but he is used to that: these are the perquisites of an incognito. Here is an instance. Martigny has gone to order the breakfast.

"Tell me, Maître Pierre," asks Quentin Durward of the king, "what is that château which I see in the distance?"

"It is the royal residence."

"The royal residence! Why, then, those battlements, those high walls, those large moats? Why so many sentinels posted at regular distances? Do you know, Maître Pierre, that it has rather the air of a fortress or of a prison than of the palace of a king?"

"You think so?"

"Why such great precautions? . . . Tell me, Maître Pierre, if you were king, would you take so much trouble to defend your dwelling?"

"But it is as well to be on one's guard; one has seen places taken by surprise, and princes carried away just when they least expected such a thing. It seems to me, besides, that the king's safety demands . . ."

"Do you know a surer rampart for a king than the love of his subjects?"

"No, of course . . . yet . . ."

"If my lot had placed me on the throne I would rather be loved than feared; I would like the humblest of my subjects to have free access to my person; I should rule with so much wisdom that none would have approached me with evil intention."

That is not recommended either by Horace or by Boileau, but by the leader of the *claque*.[1] The fashion of giving advice to a king is always creditable to an author: it is called doing the work of the opposition; and such clap-trap methods appeal to the gallery.

In spite of the advice given by Mély-Janin to Charles X.

[1] Hired applauders.

which the latter should have followed as coming from a friend, he appointed the Polignac Ministry. We know the consequences of that nomination.

Martigny returns. The meal is ready; they sit down to the table. The wine loosens their tongues, especially the small white wine which is drunk on the banks of the Loire. Quentin Durward then informs the king that he is not engaged in the service of any prince, that he is seeking his fortune, and that he has some inclination to enlist in the Scots Guards, where he has an uncle who is an officer.

Here, you see, the drama begins to run on all fours with the romance. But what a difference between the handling of the romance-writer and that of the dramatist, between the man called Walter Scott and the man called Mély-Janin. Now, as the conversation begins to become interesting, the king rises and goes away without giving any other reason for his departure than that which I myself give you, and which I am obliged to guess at. If you question it, here is his bit—

"Adieu, Seigneur Quentin; we shall see each other again. Rely upon the friendliness of Maître Pierre. (*Aside to Martigny*) Be sure to tell him that which concerns him; I leave thee free to do what thou deemest fitting."

"Be at ease, sire."

Left alone with Quentin Durward, Martigny at once informs him that the Comtesse de Croy has taken refuge at the court of King Louis XI., and lives in the ancient château which he points out to him. Then Quentin Durward implores Martigny to go into the castle and give a letter to Isabelle.

"Ah! Sir Durward, what are you thinking about?" exclaimed Martigny, who in his capacity as a citizen of Tours does not know that the title of *Sir* is only used before a baptismal name.

"You must, it is absolutely imperative!" insists Quentin.

"I beg you to believe that if the thing were possible. (*Aside*) I am more anxious to get in than he. (*Aloud*) Listen, I foresee a way."

You do not guess the way? It is, indeed, a strange one for a man who does not dare to put a love-letter behind walls,

doors, curtains, tapestries and portières. You shall know the method employed before long.

Quentin Durward, left alone, informs the audience that the Comte de Crèvecoeur, who comes to claim Isabelle, shall only have her at the expense of his own life. In short, he talks long enough to give Martigny time to enter the château, to see Isabelle, and to put the method in question into practice—

"Well?" asks Quentin.
"I have spoken to her."
"What did she say?"
"Nothing."
"Nothing?"
"Nothing at all; but she blushed, went pale and fainted."
"She fainted? What happiness!"
"When she regained consciousness she talked of taking the air. Look, look, turn your eyes in that quarter."
"My God! It is she! (*To Martigny*) Go away, I implore you!"
(*Martigny hides behind a mass of trees.*)

The method employed by the man who did not dare to get a note conveyed into a closed room guarded by a confidant was to make Isabelle come out into the open air, in full view of the château de Plessis-les-Tours. Not bad, was it? Isabelle is in a tremble. And with good reason! She knows that Martigny is the King's confidant, and she has her doubts about Martigny being at a safe distance, Martigny, a gallant naturally full of cunning, since he has better emissaries than those of the king, and tells Louis XI. things he does not know. So she only comes on to say to Quentin: "Be off with you!" Only, she says it in nobler terms and in language more befitting a princess—

"Go away, I entreat you!"
"One single word!"
"I am spied upon, . . . they might surprise us!"
"But at least reassure my heart. What! go without seeing me! . . . Ah! cruel one! You do not know how much absence . . ."
"I must be cautious for both of us, Seigneur Durward; they will explain everything to you. Go away! . . . Let it be enough for the present to know that you are loved more than ever. Go!"

"But this silence . . ."

"Says more than any words . . ."

"Adieu, then!"

[*He kisses the Countess's hand.*]

"Come, depart!" says Éléonore.

[*Quentin goes out at one side and the Countess at the other.*]

"And we will go and inform the king of all that has happened," says Martigny, coming out from behind his thicket of trees.

END OF ACT I

We clearly perceived that rascal Martigny hiding himself behind that thicket; well, look what took place, notwithstanding: Isabelle and Quentin Durward, who had greater interest in knowing it than we, had no suspicion! Who says now that Youth is not confident? But now let us pass on to the first act of *Louis XI.* by Casimir Delavigne, and let us see if the national poet is much stronger and more realistic than the royalist poet.

CHAPTER XVI

Casimir Delavigne's *Louis XI*

THERE is very little incident in the drama we have just been analysing. Very well, there is less still in the tragedy which we are about to examine.

Mély-Janin's *mise-en-scène* is quite improbable enough, is it not? Well—Casimir Delavigne's is more improbable still. In the first place, the landscape is the same. Here is the description of it—

"*A countryside—the château of Plessis-les-Tours in the back ground; a few scattered cottages at the side.* IT IS NIGHT."

You must know that if I underline the last three words it is not without a motive. As the curtain rises, Tristran, who is on sentry-duty, stops and compels a poor peasant named Richard to go back into his cottage instead of letting him go to Saint-Martin-des-Bois, to obtain the consolations of religion for a dying man. The scene has no other importance than to show in what manner the police of Louis XI. act in the neighbourhood of Plessis-les-Tours. The peasant re-enters his cottage, Tristran goes back into the fortress, and leaves the place to Comines, who arrives on the scene, holding a roll of parchment, and seats himself at the foot of an oak tree. It is still night. Guess why Comines comes there, in that particlar place, where the police guard so strictly that they do not even allow peasants to go out to obtain the viaticum for the dying, and where they can be seen from every loophole in the château? Comines comes there to read his *Mémoires*, which deal with the history of Louis XI.

"But," you will say, "he cannot read because it is dark!"

"Wait! the dawn is coming."

"But, if dawn comes, Comines will be seen."

"He will hide behind a tree."

"Would it not be much simpler, especially at such an hour, *i.e.* four o'clock in the morning, for him to re-read his *Mémoires* in his own home, in his study, with pen and ink at hand, in case he has anything to add; with his pen-knife and eraser close by, if he has something to delete?"

"Yes, certainly, it would be much simpler; but don't you see that the author needs Comines to do this particular business out of doors; so poor Comines must, of course, do what the author wishes!" Comines himself knows very well that he would be better elsewhere, and he has not come there of his own will. He does not hide from himself the danger he is incurring if they see him working at such a task, and if his manuscripts were to fall under the king's notice. But listen to him rather than to me—

> "*Mémoires de Comines!* Ah! si les mains du roi
> Déroulaient cet écrit, qui doit vivre après moi,
> Où chacun de ses jours, recueillis par l'histoire,
> Laisse un tribut durable et de honte et de gloire,
> Tremblant on le verrait, par le titre arrêté,
> Pâlir devant son règne à ses yeux présenté!"

I ask you what would have become of the historian who could have made Louis XI. turn pale! But, no doubt, Comines, who knew the rebels of the war of the *Bien Public*, the jailor of Cardinal la Balue and especially the murderer of Nemours,—since he calculated on marrying his daughter to the son of the victim,—absorbed in I know not what spirit of pre-occupation, reading his *Mémoires* in so dangerous a place as this, will keep one eye open whilst he reads his *Mémoires* with the other. Not a bit of it! You can judge whether or not this is what is meant by the stage-direction: *Doctor Coitier passes at the back of the stage, looks at Comines and goes into Richard's cottage.*"

Thus, just as Louis XI. did not see Isabelle, though it was to his interest to see her, so Comines, who is anxious not to be

seen, is seen and does not himself see. You tell me such absent-mindedness cannot last long on the part of such a man as Comines. Second mistake! Instead of waking out of his reveries—"*He remains absorbed in his reading.*" With this result, that Coitier comes out of the peasant's cottage and says—

"Rentrez, prenez courage:
Des fleurs que je prescris composez sou breuvage;
Par vos mains exprimés, leurs sues adoucissants
Rafraîchiront sa plaie, et calmeront ses sens."

Take particular note that these lines are said at the back of the stage, that Comines is between the audience and the person who utters them and that Comines—extraordinary to relate!—does not hear them, whilst the public, which is at a double, triple, quadruple distance from the doctor, hears them perfectly. Never mind! "*Without perceiving Coitier,*" our historian continues—

"Effrayé du portrait, je le vois en silence
Chercher un châtiment pour tant de ressemblance!"

It seems to me that knowing so well to what he is exposing himself, this was the moment or never for Comines to look round him. There is no danger! He acts as children do who are sent to bed before their mother, and who are so afraid in their beds that they shut their eyes in order not to see anything. Only, there is this difference, that with children the danger is fictitious, whilst in the case of Comines it is real; children are children, and Comines is a man, a historian, a courtier and a minister. Now, I perfectly understand the terror of children; but I do not understand Comines's imprudence. And Coitier sees him, comes up to him and actually claps him on the shoulder, before Comines has either seen or heard Coitier.

"COITIER (*clapping Comines on the shoulder*).—
Ah! Seigneur d'Argenton, salut!
Comines, *tressaillant*
Qui m'a parlé?
Vous! . . . Pardon, je rêvais . . ."

You might even, my dear Comines, say that you were sleeping, and that your sleep was heavy and imprudent.

Now why does Coitier, in his turn, bring Comines out of his dreams? Why does he loiter outside Plessis-les-Tours, whilst the king is waiting for him impatiently? Comines points this out to him; for poor Comines, who takes little care of his own safety, looks to the well-being of others, which ought to be Coitier's own affair, who is a doctor, rather than his, who is a minister.

"COMINES.

Mais, vous, maître Coitier, dont les doctes secrets
Ont des maux de ce roi ralenti les progrès,
Cette heure, à son lever, chaque jour vous rappelle:
Qui peut d'un tel devoir détourner votre zèle?"

Coitier might well reply to him: "Et vous?" . . . for it is more surprising to see a historian under an oak at four o'clock in the morning, than a doctor upon the high road. But he prefers rather to reply—

"Le roi! toujours le roi! Qu'il attende! ... ."

You tell me that it is in order to reveal the character of the person; that Coitier does not love the king, whom he attends, and that, this morning, in particular, he is angry with him for a crime which he had failed to commit the previous day. It would have been more logical for Coitier to be angry with Louis XI. for the crimes he has committed than for those which he has failed to commit, all the more since, with regard to the former, he would have had plenty to choose from. However, here is the crime—

"COITIER.

Hier, sur ces remparts,
Un pâtre que je quitte attira ses regards;
Des archers du Plessis l'adresse meurtrière
Faillit, en se jouant, lui ravir la lumière!"

Which is equivalent to saying that the poor devil for whom Coitier, the night before, had ordered *a draught of the soothing*

syrup which would cool his wound, had received an arrow from a cross-bow, either in the arm or in the leg, it matters not where. But how can a draught cool a wound unless the remedy be so efficacious that it can both be administered as a drink and applied as a poultice? Now we will return to the question we proposed a little while ago: Why, instead of going to attend the king, who is impatient for him, does Coitier rouse Comines out of his dreams? Bless me, what a question! Why, to develop the tragedy. Now, this is what one learns in the development: that Comines, who, in conjunction with Coitier, has saved Nemours, takes with both hands all that Louis XI. gives him, in order to give it all back again, in the future, to his future son-in-law. Coitier complains bitterly, on his side, of the life led by the doctor to a king, and in such round terms, that, if the king heard, he would certainly change his doctor. The conversation is interrupted by Comines's daughter, Marie, who arrives on foot, quite alone, at half-past four in the morning!—where from, do you think? From looking for St. Francis de Paul. Where has she been to look for him? History does not say, no more than it does where Marie slept; it is, however, a question natural enough for a father to address to his daughter. But Marie relates such beautiful stories of the saint, who only needs canonisation to make him a complete saint, that Comines thinks of nothing else but of listening to her.

"MARIE.

Le saint n'empruntait par sa douce majesté
Au sceptre pastoral dont la magnificence
Des princes du conclave alleste la puissance:
Pauvre, et, pour crosse d'or, un rameau dans les mains,
Pour robe, un lin grossier, traînant sur les chemins;
C'est lui, plus humble encor qu'an fond de sa retraite!

COITIER.

Et que disait tout bas cet humble anachorète,
En voyant la litière où le faste des cours
Prodiguait sa mollesse au vieux prélat de Tours,
Et ce cheval de prix dont l'amble doux et sage
Pour monseigneur de Vienne abrégeait le voyage?

MARIE.

Tous les deux, descendus, marchaient à ses côtés."

Attention! for I am going to put a question to which I challenge you to give an answer—

"*Tous les deux, descendus, marchaient à ses côtés!*"

Who is it who walks beside the humble anchorite? Was it the litter? Was it the old prelate? Was it monseigneur from Vienna? Was it the horse? If we take the sense absolutely given by the construction of the sentence, it was not the prelate of Tours and the monseigneur of Vienna who stepped down, the one from his litter, the other from his horse, but the horse and the litter, on the contrary, who stepped down, the one from the old prelate of Tours, the other from the monseigneur of Vienna. The difficulty of understanding this riddle no doubt decides Coitier to return to the king, leaving Marie alone with her father. Then, Marie tells the latter a second piece of news, much more interesting than the first, namely, that the Comte de Rethel has arrived.

"MARIE.

Berthe, dont je le tiens, l'a su du damoisel
Qui portait la bannière où, vassal de la France,
Sous la fleur de nos rois, le lion d'or s'élance!"

Which means, if I am not deceived, that the Comte de Rethel bears the arms of gules either of azure on a golden lion, with a fleur-de-lys *au chef*. One thing makes Marie especially happy: that the Comte de Rethel is going to give her news of Nemours, whom he left at Nancy. In fact, Nemours, whose father has been executed, cannot return to France without exposing himself to capital punishment. Chanting is heard at this juncture; it is the procession of St. Francis de Paul, which is coming.

"*Entendez-vous ces chants, dans la forêt voisine?*"

Says Marie—

"*Le cortège s'avance et descend la colline.*"

No doubt, in his capacity as historian, Comines will be curious to see so extraordinary a man as St. Francis de Paul. You are wrong. "Come in!" says Comines drily; and he and his daughter leave the stage, just as the head of the cortège appears in sight. But why on earth do they leave the stage? Is there any reason for it? Yes, indeed, there is a reason. Among the people in the procession is Nemours,—for the supposed Comte de Rethel is no other than Nemours,—and neither Comines nor Marie must know that he is there. Now what is Nemours doing under the title of the Comte de Rethel? He has come to assassinate the king; but before risking the stroke, he desires to receive absolution from St. Francis de Paul. Now we know where the saint comes from; we have learnt it in the interval; he comes from Frondi, five or six hundred leagues away. Very well, will you believe that during the whole of that long journey, with the saint in front of him, Nemours could not find a more convenient place in which to ask absolution for the crime he wants to commit, than the threshold of the château of the man he intends to assassinate? We can now sum up the improbabilities of the first act thus—

Comines is out of doors at four o'clock in the morning: first improbability. He comes, before break of day, to read his *Mémoires* twenty yards from the château of Plessis-les-Tours: second improbability. He does not look around him as he reads them: third improbability. Coitier, in order to chat with him about matters they both know perfectly well, keeps the king waiting for him: fourth improbability. Marie arrives alone, at four in the morning: fifth improbability. Her father never asks where she has slept: sixth improbability. Nemours, after waiting for fifteen years, returns to France in disguise to avenge the death of his father by assassinating a king who is dying, and who, in fact, will die the following day: eighth improbability. Finally, he wishes to receive absolution from Saint Francis de Paul, and instead of making his confession in a room, in a church, in a confessional, which would be the easiest thing to do, he comes to confess at the gates of the

château: ninth improbability, which alone is worth all the eight other improbabilities!

Shall I go any further, and shall I pass on from the first to the second act? Bless me, no; it is too poor a job. Let us stop here. I only wanted to prove that, when the audience grumbled, nearly hissed and even hissed outright, at the first performance, it was not in error, and that when it did not come to see *Louis XI.* during the eight or ten times it was played, it was in the right. But is it true that the public did not go to it? The takings of the first four nights will show this—

First performance	. . .	4061 francs
Second ,,	. . .	1408 ,,
Third ,,	. . .	1785 ,,
Fourth ,,	. . .	1872 ,,

Finally, why this failure during the first four representations, and why such great success at the twentieth, thirtieth and fortieth? I am going to tell you. M. Jouslin de la Salle was manager for nearly six months, and, after he took up the management, not a play was a failure. He created successes. When he saw that, at the fourth performance, *Louis XI.* brought in eighteen hundred francs, he ordered those few persons who came to hire boxes to be told that the whole of the theatre was booked up to the tenth performance. The report of this impossibility to get seats spread over Paris. Everbody wanted to have them. Everybody had them. It was a clever trick! Now let some one else than I take the trouble to undertake, in respect of the last four acts, the work which I have just done in respect of the first, and they will see that, in spite of Ligier's predilection for this drama, it is one of the most indifferent of Casimir Delavigne's works.

END OF VOLUME V

NOTE

(*BÉRANGER*)

AU RÉDACTEUR DU JOURNAL *LA PRESSE*

JE reçois d'un ami de Béranger la réclamation suivante. Comme quelques autres personnes pourraient avoir pensé ce qu'une seule m'écrit, permettez-moi de répondre, par la voie de votre journal, non-seulement à cette dernière, mais encore à toutes celles qui ne seraient pas suffisamment renseignées sur la signification du mot "philosophe épicurien."

Voici la lettre du réclamant :

"PASSY, PRES PARIS, 5 *septembre* 1853

"MONSIEUR, — J'ai lu les deux ou trois chapitres de vos *Mémoires* où vous parlez de Béranger, et où vous copiez plusieurs de ses belles et prophétiques chansons. Vous faites l'éloge de ce grand homme de cœur et d'intelligence. C'est bien ! cela vous honore : celui qui aime Béranger doit être bon. Cependant, monsieur, vous posez cette question, qui me semble un peu malheureuse pour vous ; vous dites : 'Maintenant, peut-être me demandera-t-on comment il se fait que Béranger, républicain, habite tranquillement avenue de Châteaubriand, n° 5, à Paris, tandis que Victor Hugo demeure à Marine-Terrace, dans l'île de Jersey.'

"Vous qui appelez M. Béranger votre père, vous devriez savoir ce que tout le monde sait : d'abord, que le modeste grand poëte n'est pas un *philosophe épicurien*, comme il vous plaît de le dire, mais bien un philosophe pénétré du plus profond amour de l'humanité. M. Béranger habite Paris, parce que c'est à Paris, et non ailleurs, qu'il peut remplir son beau rôle de dévouement. Demandez à tous ceux qui souffrent, n'importe à quelle opinion ils appartiennent, si M. Béranger leur a jamais refusé de les aider, de les secourir. Toute la vie de cet homme de bien est employée à rendre service. A son âge, il aurait bien le droit de songer à se reposer ; mais, pour lui, obliger, c'est vivre.

"Quand il s'agit de recommander un jeune homme bon et honorable, quand il faut aller voir un prisonnier et lui porter de paternelles consolations, n'importe où il y a du bien à faire,

l'homme que vous appelez un *épicurien* ne regarde pas s'il pleut ou s'il neige ; il part et rentre, le soir, harassé, mais tout heureux si ses démarches ont réussi ; tout triste, tout affligé si elles ont échoué. M. Béranger n'a de la popularité que les épines. C'est lá une chose que vous auriez dû savoir, monsieur, puisque vous vous intitulez son fils dans vos *Mémoires* et un peu partout.

"Pardonnez-moi cette lettre, monsieur, et ne doutez pas un moment de mon admiration pour votre beau talent et de ma considération pour votre personne.

"M. DE VALOIS
"Grande rue, 80, à Passy"

Voici, maintenant, ma réponse :

"MONSIEUR,—Vous m'avez—dans une excellente intention, je crois—écrit une lettre tant soit peu magistrale pour m'apprendre ce que c'est que Béranger, et pour me prouver qu'il ne mérite en rien la qualification de *philosophe épicurien* que je lui donne.

"Hélas ! monsieur, j'ai peur d'une chose : c'est qu'en connaissant très-bien Béranger, vous ne connaissiez très-mal Épicure !

"Cela me paraît fort compréhensible : Béranger habitait Passy en l'an de Notre-Seigneur 1848, tandis qu'Épicure habitait Athènes en l'an du monde 3683. Vous avez connu personnellement Béranger, et je répondrais que vous ne vous êtes certainement jamais donné la peine de lire un seul des trois cents volumes que, au dire de *Diogène Laërce*, avait laissés le fils de Néoclès et de Chérestrate.

"Non, vous avez un dictionnaire de l'Académie dans votre bibliothèque ; vous avez pris ce dictionnaire de l'Académie ; vous y avez cherché le mot ÉPICURIEN, et vous avez lu la définition suivante, que le classique vocabulaire donne de ce mot :

"ÉPICURIEN, sectateur d'Épicure. Il signifie, par extension, *un voluptueux*, *un homme qui ne songe qu'à son plaisir*."

"D'abord, monsieur, vous auriez dû songer, vous, que je ne suis pas de l'Académie, et qu'il n'est point généreux de me battre avec des armes que je n'ai ni forgées ni contribué à forger.

"Il en résulte que je ne me crois pas obligé d'accepter sans discussion vos reproches, et de recevoir sans examen la définition de MM. les Quarante.

"Hélas ! moi, monsieur, j'ai lu—mon métier de romancier français m'y force—non-seulement les *Fragments d'Épicure* publiés à Leipzig en 1813, avec la version latine de Schneider, mais aussi le corps d'ouvrage publié par Gassendi, et renfermant tout ce qui

concerne la vie et la doctrine de l'illustre philosophe athénien ; mais aussi la *Morale d'Épicure*, petit in-8° publié en 1758 par l'abbé Batteux.

"En outre, je possède une excellente traduction de Diogène Laërce, lequel, vivant sous les empereurs Septime et Caracalla, c'est-à-dire 1680 ans avant nous et 500 ans après Épicure, devait naturellement mieux connaître celui-ci que vous et moi ne le connaissons.

"Je sais bien, monsieur, que Timon dit de lui :

"Vint, enfin, de Samos le dernier des physiciens ; un maître d'école, un effronté, et le plus misérable des hommes !"

"Mais Timon le *sillographe*,—ne pas confondre avec Timon le *misanthrope*, qui, vivant cent ans avant Épicure, ne put le connaître ;—Timon le *sillographe* était un poëte et un philosophe satirique : il ne faut donc pas, si l'on veut juger sainement Épicure, s'en rapporter à Timon le satirique.

"Je sais bien, monsieur, que Diotime le stoïcien le voulut faire passer pour un voluptueux, et publia, sous le nom même du philosophe qui fait l'objet de notre discussion, cinquante lettres pleines de lasciveté, et une douzaine de billets que vous diriez être sortis du boudoir de M. le marquis de Sade.

"Mais il est prouvé, aujourd'hui, que les billets étaient de Chrysippe, et que les lettres étaient de Diotime lui-même.

"Je sais bien, monsieur, que Denys d'Halicarnasse a dit qu'Épicure et sa mère allaient purgeant les maisons par la force de certaines paroles ; que le jeune philosophe accompagnait son père, qui montrait à lire à vil prix aux enfants ; qu'un de ses frères—Épicure avait deux frères—faisait l'amour pour exister, et que lui-même demeurait avec une courtisane nommée Léontie.

"Mais vous connaissez Denys d'Halicarnasse, monsieur : c'était un romancier bien plus qu'un historien ; ayant inventé beaucoup de choses sur Rome, il a bien pu en inventer quelques-unes sur Épicure. D'ailleurs, je ne vois pas qu'il y eût grand mal au pauvre petit philosophe en herbe d'accompagner sa mère, *qui purgeait les maisons avec des paroles, et son père, qui apprenait à lire à vil prix aux enfants.*

"Je voudrais fort que tous nos enfants apprissent à lire, et plus le prix que les précepteurs mettraient à leurs leçons serait vil, plus je les en estimerais,—en attendant que le gouvernement nous donnât des maîtres qui leur apprissent à lire pour rien ! Quant à

cette accusation qu'Épicure *demeurait avec une courtisane nommée Léontie*, il me semble que Béranger nous dit quelque part qu'il a connu très-intimement deux grisettes parisiennes, l'une nommée Lisette, l'autre Frétillon ; supposez que deux grisettes de Paris fassent l'équivalent d'une courtisane d'Athènes, et l'auteur des *Deux sœurs de charité* et du *Dieu des bonnes gens* n'aura rien à reprocher, ni vous non plus, monsieur, à l'auteur des trente-sept livres de *la Nature*.

" Je sais bien, monsieur, que Timocrate accuse notre philosophe de n'être pas bon citoyen, et lui reproche d'avoir eu une complaisance indigne et lâche pour Mythras, lieutenant de Lysimachus ; je sais bien encore qu'Épictète dit que sa manière de parler était efféminée et sans pudeur ; je sais bien, enfin, que l'auteur des livres de *la Joie* dit qu'il vomissait deux fois par jour parce qu'il mangeait trop.

" Mais, monsieur, l'antiquité, vous ne l'ignorez pas, était fort cancanière, et il me semble que Diogène Laërce répond victorieusement à tous ces méchants propos par des faits.

" Ceux qui lui font ces reproches, dit le biographe d'Épicure, n'ont agi, sans doute, que par excès de folie.

" Ce grand homme a de fameux témoins de son équité et de sa reconnaissance ; l'excellence de son naturel lui a toujours fait rendre justice à tout le monde. Sa patrie consacra cette vérité par les statues qu'elle dressa pour éterniser sa mémoire ; son nom fut célébré par ses amis,—dont le nombre était si grand, que les villes qu'il parcourait ne pouvaient les contenir,—aussi bien que par les disciples qui s'attachèrent à lui à cause du charme de sa doctrine, laquelle avait, pour ainsi dire, la douceur des sirènes. *Il n'y eut*, ajoute le biographe, *que le seul Métrodore de Stratonice, qui, presque accablé par l'excès de ses bontés, suivit le parti de Carnéade !* "

" Diogène Laërce continue, et moi avec lui :

" Sa vertu fut marquée en d'illustres caractères par *la reconnaissance et la piété qu'il eut envers ses parents*, et par la douceur avec laquelle il traita ses esclaves ; témoin son testament, où il donna la liberté à ceux qui avaient cultivé la philosophie avec lui, et particulièrement au fameux Mus.

" Cette même vertu fut, enfin, généralement connue par la bonté de son naturel, *qui lui fit donner universellement à tout le monde des marques d'honnêteté et de bienveillance ;* sa piété envers les dieux et *son amour pour sa patrie* ne se démentirent pas un seul instant jusqu'à la fin de ses jours. *Ce philosophe eut, en outre,*

une modestie si extraordinaire, qu'il ne voulut jamais se mêler d'aucune charge de la République.

" Il est encore certain que, *malgré les troubles qui affligèrent la Grèce, il y passa toute sa vie,* excepté deux ou trois voyages qu'il fit sur les confins de l'Ionie, *pour visiter ses amis,* qui s'assemblaient de tous côtés, *afin de venir vivre avec lui dans un jardin qu'il avait acheté au prix de quatre-vingts mines.*"

" En verité, monsieur, dites-moi si, en faisant la part de la différence des époques, ce portrait d'Épicure ne convient pas de toutes façons à notre cher Béranger?

" N'est-ce pas, en effet, de Béranger que l'on peut dire que *son bon naturel lui a toujours fait rendre justice à tout le monde;* que *le nombre de ses amis est si grand, que les villes ne peuvent les contenir;* que *le charme de sa doctrine a la douceur de la voix des sirènes;* que *sa vertu fut marquée en d'illustres caractères par la reconnaissance et la piété qu'il eut envers ses parents;* que *son amour pour sa patrie ne se démentit pas un instant jusqu'à la fin de ses jours,* et qu'enfin, *il fut d'une modestie si extraordinaire, qu'il ne voulut jamais occuper aucune charge dans la République?*

" En outre, ce fameux jardin qu'Épicure avait acheté quatre-vingts mines, et où il recevait ses amis, ne ressemble-t-il pas fort à cette retraite de Passy et à cette avenue Châteaubriand où tout ce qu'il y a de bon, de grand, de généreux, a visité et visite encore le fils du tailleur et le filleul de la fée?

" Maintenant, monsieur, passons à ce malencontreux reproche de volupté, d'égoïsme et de gourmandise qu'on a fait à Épicure, et qui cause votre vertueuse indignation contre moi et contre tous ceux qui, d'après moi, pourraient tenir Béranger pour un *philosophe épicurien.*

" Vous allez voir, monsieur, que ce reproche n'est pas mieux fondé que celui qu'on me fait, à moi qui n'ai peut-être pas bu dans ma vie quatre bouteilles de vin de Champagne, et qui n'ai jamais pu fumer un seul cigare sans être vingt-quatre heures malade, de ne savoir travailler qu'au milieu de la fumée du tabac, des bouteilles débouchées et des verres vides!

" Un demi-setier de vin," dit Dioclès dans son livre de *l'Incursion,* " suffisait aux épicuriens, et *leur breuvage ordinaire n'était que de l'eau.*"

" Le témoignage de Dioclès ne vous suffit pas? Soit! Prenez, parmi les épîtres d'Épicure lui-même, une lettre adressée à un de ses amis, et voyez ce qu'il dit à cet ami :

"Quoique je me tienne pour *satisfait d'avoir de l'eau et du pain bis*, envoyez-moi *un peu de fromage cythridien, afin que je puisse faire un repas plus excellent*, quand l'envie m'en prendra."

"Dites-moi, monsieur, cette sobriété du philosophe athénien ne ressemble-t-elle pas beaucoup à celle du chansonnier *que j'appelle mon père*, et qui veut bien, dans une lettre que je reçois de lui en même temps que la vôtre, m'appeler son fils?

"Après tout cela, et pour corroborer ce que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous dire sur ce pauvre Épicure,—si calomnié, comme vous voyez, par Timon, par Diotime, par Denys d'Halicarnasse, par Timocrate, par Épictète, par le dictionnaire de l'Académie, et même par vous!—laissez-moi vous citer deux ou trois des maximes qui faisaient le fond de sa philosophie, et vous serez forcé d'avouer qu'elles sont moins désolantes que celles de la Rochefoucauld.

V

"Il est impossible de vivre agréablement sans la prudence, sans l'honnêteté et sans la justice. La vie de celui qui pratique l'excellence de ces vertus se passe toujours dans le plaisir; de sorte que l'homme qui est assez malheureux pour n'être ni honnête, ni prudent, ni juste, est privé de ce qui peut faire la félicité de la vie."

XVI

"Le sage ne peut et ne doit jamais avoir qu'une fortune très-médiocre; mais, s'il n'est pas considérable par les biens qui dépendent d'elle, l'élévation de son esprit et l'excellence de ses conseils le mettent au-dessus des autres."

XVII

"Le juste est celui qui vit sans trouble et sans désordre; l'injuste, au contraire, est toujours dans l'agitation."

XXIX

"Entre toutes les choses que la sagesse nous donne pour vivre heureusement, il n'y en a point de si précieuse qu'un véritable ami: c'est un des biens qui nous procurent le plus de joie dans la médiocrité!"

"Je regrette, monsieur, de ne pouvoir pousser plus loin les citations ; mais je tiens à deux choses : la première, à vous répondre poste pour poste, et la seconde, en vous répondant poste pour poste, à vous prouver que, lorsque j'applique une épithète quelconque à un homme de la valeur de Béranger, c'est que j'ai la conviction, non-seulement instinctive, mais encore raisonnée, que cette épithète lui convient.

"J'espère donc que vous aurez l'obligeance d'écrire sur votre dictionnaire de l'Académie, en marge de la très-fausse définition donnée par la docte assemblée du mot ÉPICURIEN, ces mots, qui lui serviront de correctif :

"Sectateur d'Épicure, c'est-à-dire philosophe professant qu'un ami est le premier des biens que puisse nous accorder le ciel ; que la médiocrité de la fortune est une des conditions de la sagesse ; que la sobriété est la base la plus solide de la santé, et qu'enfin il est impossible de vivre, non-seulement honnêtement, mais encore agréablement, ici-bas, sans la prudence, l'honnêteté et la justice.—NOTA. Les épicuriens ne buvaient qu'un setier de vin par jour, et, le reste du temps, se désaltéraient avec de l'eau pure. Épicure, les jours de gala, mangeait sur son pain,—que, les autres jours, il mangeait sec,—un peu de fromage cythridien."

"Et, ce faisant, monsieur, vous serez arrivé à avoir vous-même et vous contribuerez à donner aux autres une idée un peu plus exacte de l'illustre philosophe dont j'ai eu, à votre avis, le malheur de dire que notre grand chansonnier était le disciple.

"Il me reste, en terminant, à vous remercier, monsieur, de votre lettre, qui, malgré l'acrimonie de certaines phrases, me paraît, au fond, inspirée par un bon sentiment.

"Veuillez agréer mes salutations empressées.

"ALEXANDRE DUMAS

"BRUXELLES, 7 *septembre* 1853"

NOTE

(*DE LATOUCHE*)

"SI cette comédie fût tombée, au théâtre, sous l'accusation de manquer aux premiers principes de la vie dans les arts, je l'aurais laissée dans l'oubli qu'elle mérite peut-être ; mais elle a été repoussée par une portion du public, dans une seule et douteuse épreuve, sous la prévention d'impudeur et d'immoralité ; quelques journaux de mes amis l'ont traitée d'obscénité révoltante, d'œuvre de scandale et d'horreur. Je la publie comme une protestation contre ces absurdités ; car, si j'accepte la condamnation, je n'accepte pas le jugement. On peut consentir à ce que le chétif enfant de quelques veilles soit inhumé par des mains empressées, mais non qu'on écrive une calomnie sur sa pierre.

"Ce que j'aurais voulu peindre, c'était la risiblé crédulité d'un roi élevé par des moines, et victime de l'ambition d'une marâtre : ce que j'aurais voulu frapper de ridicule, c'était cette éducation qui est encore celle de toutes les cours de l'Europe ; ce que j'aurais voulu montrer, c'était la diplomatie rôdant autour des alcôves royales ; ce que j'aurais voulu prouver, c'était comment rien n'est sacré pour la religion abaissée au rôle de la politique, et par quels éléments divers les légitimités se perpétuent.

"Au lieu de cette philosophique direction du drame, des juges prévenus l'ont supposé complaisant au vice, et flatteur du propre dévergondage de leur esprit. Et, pourtant, non satisfait de chercher une compensation à la hardiesse de son sujet dans la peinture d'une reine innocente, et dans l'amour profondément pur de celui qui meurt pour elle, le drame avait changé jusqu'à l'âge historique de Charles II, pour atténuer le crime de sa mère, et tourner l'infirmité de sa nature en prétentions de vieillard qui confie sa postérité à la grâce de Dieu.

"Mais, comme l'a dit un critique qui a le plus condamné ce qu'il appelle l'incroyable témérité de la tentative, la portion de l'assemblée qui a frappé d'anathème *la Reine d'Espagne* ;

ce public si violent dans son courroux, si amer dans sa défense de la pudeur blessée, ne s'est point placé au point de vue de l'auteur ; il n'a pas voulu s'associer à la lutte du poëte avec son sujet ; il n'a pas pris intérêt à ce combat de l'artiste avec la matière rebelle. Armée d'une bonne moralité bourgeoise, cette masse aveugle, aux instincts sourds et spontanés, n'a vu, dans l'œuvre entière, qu'une espèce de bravade et de défi ; elle s'est scandalisée de ce qu'on voulait lui cacher, et de ce qu'on osait lui montrer. Cette draperie à demi soulevée avec tant de précaution, cette continuelle équivoque l'ont révoltée. Plus le style et le faire de l'auteur s'assouplissaient, se voilaient, s'entouraient de réticences, de finesse, de nuances pour déguiser le fond de la pièce, plus on se choquait vivement du contraste.

"Que voulez-vous !" m'écrivait, le soir même de mon revers, un de mes amis,—car je me plais à invoquer d'autres témoignages que le mien dans la plus délicate des circonstances où il soit difficile de parler de soi,—"que voulez-vous ! une idée fixe a couru dans l'auditoire ; une préoccupation de libertinage a frappé de vertige les pauvres cervelles ; des hurleurs de morale publique se pendaient à toutes les phrases, pour empêcher de voir ce qu'il y a de naturel et de vrai dans la marche de cette intrigue, qui serpente sous le cilice et sous la gravité empesée des mœurs espagnoles. On s'est attaché à des consonnances ; on a pris au vol des terminaisons de mot, des moitiés de mot, des quarts de mot ; on a été monstrueux d'interprétation. Il y a eu, en effet, hydrophobie d'innocence. J'ai vu des maris expliquer à leurs femmes comment telle chose, qui avait l'air bonhomme, était une profonde scélératesse. Tout est devenu prétexte à communications à voix basse ; des dévots se sont révélés habiles commentateurs, et des dames merveilleusement intelligentes. Il y a de pauvres filles à qui les commentaires sur les courses de taureaux vont mettre la bestialité en tête ! Et tout ce monde-là fait bon accueil, le dimanche, aux lazzi du Sganarelle de Molière? Il y a de la pudeur à jour fixe."

"Il se présentait, sans doute, deux manières de traiter cet aventureux sujet. J'en avais mûri les réflexions avant de l'entreprendre. On pouvait et on peut encore en faire une charade en cinq actes, dont le mot sera enveloppé de phrases hypocrites et faciles, et arriver jusqu'au succès de quelques-uns de ces vaudevilles qui éludent aussi spirituellement les difficultés que le but de l'art ; mais j'ai craint, je l'avoue, que le mot de la charade (*impuissant*) ne se retrouvât au fond de cette manière d'aborder

la scène. Et puis, dans les pièces de l'école de Shakspeare et de Molière, s'offrait une autre séduction d'artiste pour répudier cette vulgaire adresse : chercher les moyens de la nature, et n'affecter pas d'être plus délicat que la vérité. Les conséquences des choix téméraires que j'ai faits m'ont porté à résister à beaucoup d'instances pour tenter avec ce drame le sort des répresentations nouvelles. Encourager l'auteur à se rattacher à la partie applaudie de l'ouvrage qu'on appelait dramatique, pour détruire ou châtrer celle qu'il espérait être la portion comique, était un conseil assez semblable à celui qu'on offrirait à un peintre, si on voulait qu'il rapprochât sur les devants de sa toile ses fonds, ses lointains, ses paysages, demi-ébauchés pour concourir à l'ensemble, et qu'il obscurcît les figures de son premier plan.

" Il fallait naïvement réussir ou tomber au gré d'une inspiration naïve. Je crois encore, et après l'événement, qu'il y avait pour l'auteur quelques chances favorables ; mais le destin des drames ne ressemble pas mal à celui des batailles : l'art peut avoir ses défaites orgueilleuses comme Varsovie, et le capricieux parterre ses brutalités d'autocrate.

" Ce n'est ni le manque de foi dans le zèle de mes amis, ni le sentiment inconnu pour moi de la crainte de quelques adversaires, ni la bonne volonté refroidie des comédiens qui m'ont conduit à cette résolution. Les comédiens, après notre disgrâce, sont demeurés exactement fidèles à leur première opinion sur la pièce. Et quel dévouement d'artiste change avec la fortune ? Le leur m'a été offert avec amitié. Je ne le consigne pas seulement ici pour payer une dette de gratitude, mais afin d'encourager, s'il en était besoin, les jeunes auteurs à confier sans hésitation leurs plus périlleux ouvrages à des talents et à des caractères aussi sûrs que ceux de Monrose, de Perrier, de Menjaud et de mademoiselle Brocard, dont la grâce s'est montrée si poétique et la candeur si passionnée.

" Mais, au milieu même de notre immense et tumultueux aréopage, entre les bruyants éloges des uns, la vive réprobation des autres, à travers deux ou trois partialités bien rivales, il m'a été révélé, dans l'instinct de ma bonne foi d'auteur, qu'il n'y avait pas sympathie entre la donnée vitale de cette petite comédie et ce public d'apparat qui s'assied devant la scène comme un juge criminaliste, qui se surveille lui-même, qui s'impose à lui-même, qui prend son plaisir en solennité, et s'électrise de délicatesse et de rigueur de convention. Que ce fût sa faute ou la mienne, qu'au lieu de goûter, comme dit Bertinazzi, *la chair du poisson*, le public

de ce jour-là se fût embarrassé les mâchoires avec les arêtes, toujours est-il que j'ai troublé sa digestion.

"Devant le problème matrimonial que j'essayais à résoudre sous la lumière du gaz, au feu des regards masculins, quelques dignes femmes se sont troublées peut-être avec un regret comique, peut-être avec un soupir étouffé. Mais j'avais compté sur de plus universelles innocences ; j'espérais trouver la mienne par-dessus le marché de la leur. J'ai mal spéculé. Il s'en est rencontré là de bien spirituelles, de bien jolies, de bien irréprochables ; mais pouvais-je raisonnablement imposer des conditions générales ?

"J'ai indigné les actrices de l'Opéra, j'ai scandalisé des séminaristes, j'ai fait perdre contenance à des marquis et à des marchandes de modes ! Vous eussiez, dès la troisième scène du premier acte, vu quelques douairières dont les éventails se brisaient, se lever dans leur loge, s'abriter à la hâte sous le velours de leur chapeau noir, et, dans l'attitude de sortir, s'obstiner à ne pas le faire pour feindre de ne plus entendre l'acteur, et se faire répéter, par un officieux cavalier, quelques prétendues équivoques, afin de crier au scandale en toute sécurité de conscience. L'épouse éplorée du commissaire de police s'enfuit au moment où l'amoureux obtient sa grâce.—Ceci est un fait historique.—Elle a fui officiellement, enveloppée de sa pelisse écossaise ! Je garde pour moi quelques curieux détails, des noms propres, plus d'une utile anecdote, et comment la clef forée du dandy était enveloppée bravement sous le mouchoir de batiste destiné à essuyer les sueurs froides de son puritanisme. Mais j'ai été perdu dans les cousins des grandes dames, qui se sont pris à venger l'honneur des maris, quand j'ai eu affaire aux chastetés d'estaminet et aux éruditions des magasins à prix fixe.

"Seulement, Dieu me préserve d'entrer en intelligence avec les scrupules de mes interprètes. Ma corruption rougirait de leur pudeur.

"J'ai été sacrifié à la pudeur, à la pudeur des vierges du parterre ; car, aller supposer que j'ai pu devenir victime de la cabale, ce serait une bien vieille et bien gratuite fatuité. Contre moi, quelques lâches rancunes ? Et d'où viendraient elles ? Je n'ai que des amitiés vives et des antipathies candides. A qui professe ingénument le mépris d'un gouvernement indigne de la France, pourquoi des ennemis politiques ? Et pourquoi des ennemis littéraires à l'auteur d'un article oublié sur *la Camaraderie*, et au plus paresseux des rédacteurs d'un bénin journal qu'on appelle *Figaro ?*

"Mais je n'ai pas voulu tomber obstinément comme tant d'autres

après vingt soirées de luttes, entre des enrouements factices, des sifflets honnêtes et des applaudissements à poings fermés. Imposer son drame au public, comme autrefois les catholiques leur rude croyance aux Albigeois ; chercher l'affirmation d'un mérite dans deux négations du parterre ; calculer combien il faut d'avanies pour se composer un succès, c'est là un de ces courages que je ne veux pas avoir. Il appartenait, d'ailleurs, à la reine d'Espagne de se retirer chastement du théâtre ; c'est une noble princesse, c'est une épouse vierge, élevée dans les susceptibilités du point d'honneur de la France.

" Quelques-uns aiment mieux sortir par la fenêtre que trébucher dans les escaliers ; à qui prend étourdiment le premier parti, il peut être donné encore de rencontrer le gazon sous ses pas ; mais, pour l'autre, et sans compter la multiplicité des meurtrissures, il expose votre robe de poëte à balayer les traces du passant.

" Cependant, au fond d'une chute éclatante, il y a deux sentiments d'amertume que je ne prétends point dissimuler ; mais je ne conseille à personne autre que moi de les conseiller : le premier est la joie de quelques bonnes âmes, et le second, le désenchantement des travaux commencés. Ce n'est pas l'ouvrage attaqué qu'on regrette, mais l'espérance ou l'illusion de l'avenir. Rentré dans sa solitude, ces pensées qui composaient la famille du poëte, il les retrouve en deuil et comme éplorées de la perte d'une sœur, car vous vous êtes flatté d'un avenir plus digne de vos consciencieuses études ; le sort de quelques drames prônés ailleurs avait éveillé en vous une émulation. Si le triomphe de médiocrité indigne, il encourage ; s'il produit la colère, il produit aussi la confiance, et, à force d'être coudoyé à tout moment par des grands hommes, le démon de l'orgueil vous avait visité ; il était venu rôder autour du lit où vous dormiez en paix ; il avait évoqué le fantôme de vos rêveries bizarres ; elles étaient descendues autour de vous, se tenant la main, vous demandant la vie, vous jetant des sourires, vous promettant des fleurs, et, maintenant, elles réclament toutes l'obscurité pour refuge. Ainsi tombe dans le cloître un homme qu'un premier amour a trompé.

" Mais, je le répète, que ce découragement ne soit contagieux pour personne. Ne défendez pas surtout le mérite de l'ouvrage écarté comme l'unique création à laquelle vous serez jamais intéressé. N'imitez pas tel jeune homme qui se cramponne à son premier drame, comme une vieille femme à son premier amour. Point de ces colères d'enfant contre la borne où vous vous êtes heurté. Il faudrait oublier jusqua'à une injustice dans les travaux

d'un meilleur ouvrage. Que vos explications devant le public n'aillent pas ressembler à une apologie, et songez encore moins à vous retrancher dans quelque haineuse préface, à vous créneler dans une disgrâce, pour tirer, de là, sur tous ceux que vous n'avez pas pu séduire. Du haut de son buisson, la pie-grièche romantique dispute peut-être avec le croquant ; mais, si, au pied du chêne ou il s'est posé un moment, l'humble passereau, toujours moqueur et bon compagnon, entend se rassembler des voix discordantes, il va chercher plus loin des échos favorable.

"Je ne finirai pas sans consigner ici un aveu dont je n'ai pu trouver la place dans la rapide esquisse de cet avertissement. Je déclare que je dois l'idée première de la partie bouffone de cette comédie à une grave tragédie allemande ; plusieurs détails relatifs à la nourrice Jourdan, à un excellent livre de M. Mortonval ; la réminiscence d'un sentiment de prêtre amoureux, au chapitre VII du roman de *Cinq-Mars*, et, enfin, une phrase tout entière, à mon ami Charles Nodier. Cette confession est la seule malice que je me permettrai contre les plagiaires qui pullulent chaque jour, et qui sont assez effrontés et assez pauvres pour ne m'épargner à moi-même ni leur vol, ni leur silence. La phrase de Nodier, je l'avais appropriée à mon dialogue avec cette superstition païenne qui pense éviter la foudre à l'abri d'une feuille de laurier, avec la foi du chrétien qui essaye à protéger sa demeure sous un rameau bénit. L'inefficacité du préservatif n'ébranlera pas dans mon cœur la religion de l'amitié.

"H. DE LATOUCHE

"AULNAY, *le* 10 *novembre* 1831"

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